













THE,  
PARSONAGE.

BY  
RODOLPH TOPFFER.

IN TWO VOLS.

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## NOTICE OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

III

### RODOLPH TOPFFER.

TOPFFER liked neither biographies nor portraits. "All such," said he, "are false—false as an epitaph. Biographers and painters compose a set of features according to their fancy, after a model which they themselves have formed; selecting certain traits which are real and omitting certain others, according to the peculiar bias of each person's tastes and disposition." We owe it therefore to his memory, so to speak, to spare him such a portraiture; and not to look for the author apart from his writings, or the artist except in his designs; where moreover he will be found entire, in which he still lives and breathes, displaying an honest and tender heart, a refined and lively intellect, a simple and at the same time penetrating genius, which requires some study to appreciate at its full worth.

Devoted to the serious occupation of teaching, living with his pupils as if they only served to enlarge the boundaries of his family circle, every year during the vacation he conducted his young troop on a tour through the lakes and mountains of Switzerland—excursions of a father with his children, in which even fatigues were viewed as pleasures, because endured in common—delightful pilgrimages, marked by picturesque incidents and joyous episodes! On their return, during the long winter evenings, the master took up his pencil or his pen to re-

trace the impressions of their summer's travels,† and scattered on his page witty and ludicrous images, to amuse the leisure hours of those who surrounded him, and to give free scope to his tastes as an artist.

How did fame and reputation happen to knock at this modest door? How did success crown him who did not even dream of it, and whose sole wish was to please a circle of dearly-loved friends? 'Talent seems to breathe a perfume which betrays its lurking-place, to have a halo which points it out to admiring notice.' It is in vain for it to shrink from view, sooner or later it finds itself surprised in the darkest recesses of its modest retreat. One day Goethe found by chance one of Töpffer's albums: he enjoyed it greatly, and expressed a wish to see some others. Another day Xavier de Maistre chanced to meet with a little treatise, at once sentimental and critical, which Töpffer had written on *painting in Indian ink*. The book pleased him: he sent from Naples, where he was residing, a handsome stick of Indian ink, with a letter of sincere praise. Some years afterwards the same Xavier de Maistre produced in the Parisian world of letters, the *Tales and Sketches*† of Töpffer, which were at once and decidedly successful. The author of the *Journey round my Chamber* was fortunate enough himself to find his literary successor, and to cause him to be accepted as such by the public.

The distinctive feature of Töpffer's genius is a vein of gentle sensibility, which springs from a well-regulated mind, a loving and trusting heart, and a pure and upright life. It is not the burning emotion, the passionate delirium, the fevered tenderness, of Jean-Jacques; neither is it the rather refined and affected sentimentality of Xavier de Maistre—that romantic philosophy of the 18th century, preparing for publication in the PARLOIR LIBRARY.

\* *Zig Zag Travels*, preparing for publication in the PARLOIR LIBRARY.

† Preparing for publication in the PARLOIR LIBRARY.



heart, which displays so much intellectuality and affords so much delight. No; in Töpffer's writings the reader must not expect anything but artless emotions, the unaffected movements of a heart which has not yet learned to refine upon its joys or its sorrows, or to find subject for pain in the very poignancy of its feelings. You recognise at the first glance the happy influence of the sphere in which the author moved—a calm and untroubled circle, enjoying all the blessings of civilized life, but still retaining something of the innocence of the olden time, and preserving, under the modern yoke of conventionalism, something of the openness and freedom of the Life of Nature.

In forming Töpffer's genius, both Switzerland and Geneva have played a part. He is the true son of that twice happy community, the first of modern times to enjoy the fruits of liberty, and that also in which Nature has best preserved her empire and her rights. From thence, by a rare and happy combination, the union of the skilled and exquisite graces of the intellect with simplicity of mind and heart; from thence a literature at once refined and sincere—ripe in thought and young in heart. It displays the resources of art, and frequently in its most elaborate form, viz. when it succeeds in concealing its own existence. Its inspiration, on the contrary, seems perfectly primitive. No vain researches, no laborious efforts, no taste for surprises, no leanings towards excess: the artist draws his materials from the most familiar, nay the most humble sources, and we see an edifice sprung up of which even the first stone seemed to have been wanting. Such are the wonderful resources of simplicity and ingenuousness. Pretentious art is soon at the end of its chain—simple art is neither wearied nor exhausted.

What adds, moreover, a peculiar value to the *finesse* of the Genevan author, is, that along with the truthful and ingenuous sensibility we have already eulogized, he evinces an uprightness of heart which animates all his writings,

And which is relieved by a frank and artless gaiety. In truth there are very few works whose moral tendency is so admirable, in which the claims of duty are advanced and urged with so much firmness, in which the voice of justice and rectitude sounds with that clearness and sincerity which can spring only from a rightly constituted mind, ever aiming at the good and true. The reader feels that the author is not acting a part foreign to his feelings: that he has not borrowed from without those excellent rules of conduct, and those principles of probity and truthfulness, which he inculcates. It is his own life and feelings which are painted in his writings. Severity, therefore, appears lovely from his pen; and even when he draws a rigid character, when he preaches a system of morality almost bordering on harshness, as in the Precentor of the *Parsonage*, his precepts do not offend our weakness: they retain a sort of touching unction, a certain graceful charity, and, severe as they are, they are still gentle and clement, because they assuredly spring from the heart.

Then, as we have said, this morality, which is the governing principle of the story, is most happily tempered and relieved by a gaiety at once gentle, amiable, and innocent. Töpfler's gaiety is not merely the *humour* of Sterne or De Maistre: it is also a natural liveliness of disposition, a sort of satisfaction of heart, which has its source in a pure and happy life, and which is produced by a consciousness of duties fulfilled, and fulfilled too from preference and taste. This gaiety does not display itself in noisy demonstrations; it is wanting, perhaps, in peculiar features, and above all, in distinguishing points; it seeks not ludicrous phrases nor grotesque images—in short, it smiles rather than laughs—it produces on the mind of the reader an impression of content and gratification rather than excites it to gaiety—it pleases rather than diverts.

ALBERT AUBERT.



## THE PARSONAGE.

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THERE are moments in life when a fortunate combination of circumstances appears to surround us with happiness. The calmness of the passions and the absence of anxiety predispose us to enjoyment, and if to this contentment of mind is added a position in life comprising all material comforts and embellished by agreeable sensations, the hours then flow on deliciously and the feeling of existence is decked in its most smiling colours.

This was precisely the situation in which the three personages whom I had under my eyes found themselves placed. Nothing in their physiognomy betrayed the least anxiety, the slightest trouble, or the faintest remorse; on the contrary, from the gentle swell of their bosoms, it was apparent that they enjoyed that legitimate pride which springs from a contented spirit. The gravity of their demeanour proclaimed the serenity of their minds and the virtuous tenor of their thoughts; and even at the moment when, yielding to the seducing influences of a melting sun, they dropped asleep, it seemed as if their very slumbers exhaled a sweet perfume of innocence and peace.

For my own part (man is liable to wicked thoughts), after looking at them for a moment or two, I found myself fingering a stone. At last, strongly impelled by a mischievous impulse, I hurled it into the pond close by. Instantly the three heads started from under their wings.

• They were three ducks; I forgot to say so. They were taking their siesta, while I, seated on the border of the pond, was thinking, almost as happy as my peaceful companions.

• In the country, the noon-tide hour is a period of silence, of repose, of reverie. Whilst the sun darts his rays perpendicularly upon the plains, man and beast suspend their labours. The wind is hushed, the grass droops, and the insects alone, animated by the heat, send forth a prolonged hum overhead, forming a distant music which seems even to increase the silence.

Of what was I thinking? Of all sorts of things,—little, great, indifferent, or charming to my heart. I listened to the chirp of the grasshopper; or else, stretched upon my back, I watched the changing shape of a cloud in the broad firmament overhead. At other times, reclining with my face to the earth, I gazed upon the humid moss covering the foot of an aged willow, and strewn over with almost imperceptible flowers. I soon discovered, in this little world, mountains, valleys, shady pathways, frequented by some golden insect, some industrious ant. To all these objects there was attached in my mind an idea of mystery and power, which insensibly elevated me from earth to heaven; and then, the presence of the Creator making itself strongly felt, my heart feasted itself on sublime imaginations.

Sometimes, with my eyes fixed upon the mountains, I dreamed of what might lie beyond them; of distant countries, of sandy coasts, of boundless seas; and if in the midst of my travels I happened to stumble upon some other idea, I followed it wherever it might lead me: so, that from the extremity of the ocean I would suddenly rush back to the neighbouring meadow, or even to the sleeve of my coat.

• I thus happened to turn my eyes on the old parsonage which stood about fifty paces distant from the pond, behind me. I seldom failed to do so when the clock approached the hour, and when

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expected to see the hammer raised, black upon the azure of the sky, and fall upon the bell. Above all, I loved to follow with listening ear the sonorous echo which the last stroke left lingering behind, and to watch the decreasing undulations until their dying harmony faded into silence.

Then my thoughts returned to the parsonage, to its peaceful inmates, to Louise—and letting my head fall upon my hand, I wandered, in company with a thousand recollections, in a world known to my own heart alone.

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These recollections were of the sports, the pleasures, the rustic pastimes in which our childhood had glided away. We had cultivated our little gardens, reared birds, kindled bonfires at the corner of the meadow, led the beasts into the fields, mounted the ass, knocked the walnuts from the tree, and sported among the hay together. Not a cherry-tree in the orchard, not one of the peach-trees which covered the southern wall of the parsonage, but was distinguished by us from every other in the whole world by a thousand recollections, returning like its fruits at each recurring season. I had (boyhood is prone to mischief)—I had for her pilfered the early fruits from the orchards of the opulent farmers in the neighbourhood—for her I had been engaged in many a fray with the dog, with the *garde-champêtre*, with the *municipal*—incorrigible in my transgressions so long as she enjoyed the early fruits of the year. In those days, wholly engrossed with the present, I ran, I climbed, I thought little and dreamed less, unless indeed it were sometimes, at night, of the *garde-champêtre*.

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But on this day of which I speak, it was not with this *garde-champêtre* that my thoughts were occupied. Beside him was dead; and his successor, having found me recently in solitary meditation on the margin

VOL. I.      had lying in wait for the season's earliest

fruits, had formed a very favourable opinion of my character. This rational man had divined that the preference which I displayed for the barren borders of this pool of water, could only arise from a preoccupation of mind totally at variance with that desire to obtain the first produce of the year, which it was his own especial business to retain within just limits.

In fact, notwithstanding the ungrateful sterility of its narrow margin, I had conceived a singular affection for this little pond and its old truncated willow. Little by little I had made it my own domicile, certain as I was at the mid-day hour to meet no one there ~~but~~ the three ducks, whose tranquil society was most grateful to me ever since the consciousness of their presence had become associated with the charm of my reveries.

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I must also mention that, in consequence of a singular change which had taken place within me, I had for some time past preferred to think of Louise rather than be in her company.

This strange inclination had sprung up I know not how; for we were still the same beings who heretofore had been actuated by no other desire than to seek each other, in order to talk, to race, to play, together. Only I had sometimes latterly seen a blush rise to her cheek, and had observed that an increasing timidity, a deepening seriousness in her smile, and an indescribable air of modesty and constraint, had taken the place of her former wild gaiety and her natural joyousness of spirits. This mysterious change had deeply moved me, insomuch that although I had known her from my infancy, it nevertheless seemed to me as if we had only recently become acquainted, and this feeling caused some embarrassment in my manner towards her. It was about this time that I had begun to frequent the pond, where, accompanied by her image, I forgot myself for whole hours together. I delighted especially in recurring to the past, for the sake of embellishing the recollections of which I have

spoken, with this new charm which I had discovered in her. I recalled them one by one even to the most distant, and, imparting to each of them the recent impressions of my own heart, I passed once more with delight through all the situations and the incidents of our simple village life, tasting again a pleasure which made me cherish them with tenderness.

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I received a visit. It was a sparrow who just then came and boldly perched himself upon the willow. I love sparrows, and I always protect them. This is a heroic part to play for those who live in the country, where every one detests them and conspires against their wicked life, for their daily crime is to eat the grain.

I was acquainted with this particular sparrow, and with three or four others also, with whom I made common cause against the selfishness of man. The wheat being ripe, the proprietor of the field had planted in the centre of the field a tall vine pole, surmounted by an old hat, which served as a head to the floating rags which adorned it: in such sort that the sparrows saw perfectly well the large and golden ears of corn, but for all the corn in the world dared not have touched a single pickle under the eyes of the grave magistrate who had been placed there for its protection. The consequence was, that, while approaching the pond along the margin of the field, I never failed to gather some dozen ears, not only without remorse but with a secret joy; and scattering the grain around me, I saw, with a pleasure which I cannot describe, the sparrows descend from the neighbouring branches for this simple repast, and pick the corn almost from my hand. And when in returning I passed by the scarecrow, a slight emotion of pride swelled my bosom.

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The sparrow after a short sojourn on the willow, flew down and seized upon one of the ears of corn which were lying beside the ducks. Now ducks are masters on their

own premises, and consider it an impertinent attempt in a sparrow to disturb them. So stretching out their necks with an air of anger, my three acquaintances followed with loud cackle the nimble bird, who was already winging his way aloft, and soon joyfully regained his nest, the ear of corn in his beak, in the very teeth of the scarecrow.

But the quack of the ducks—it was not from any feeling of impertinence, but rather, I am persuaded, from the powerful effect of those mysterious laws which preside over the association of ideas—the rather hoarse quack which my three companions had just given utterance to, involuntarily brought to my thoughts the precursor of the parsonage. That which induces me to believe that in this I was not actuated by any malicious intention, is, that I had little inclination to think of this man, and that I discarded him as much as possible from my thoughts, to which he was never present without disturbing their serenity. In fact, beyond every other being, he had made me experience fear, shame, anger, even hatred, and other evil passions, of which, had it not been for him, I might long have remained in ignorance.

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He passed for a just man; I found him ill-natured: he was called severe; I found him brutal. My motives for coming to this conclusion were, I must confess, personal. For the sake of justice he had more than once denounced my crimes to the principal proprietors of the neighbourhood, to the *garde-champêtre*, even to my guardian, giving me the character of an incorrigible profligate. It was from severity however, that, adding action to words, he had more than once made me acquainted with the weight of his arm, and the sonorous slap of his large hand. These were the motives which influenced my opinion. If I had lived with him alone, I might perhaps have grown accustomed to these proceedings, and, knowing that my own conduct was seldom irreproachable, I might have looked upon them as the result of a virtuous indignation. But I had other examples before my eyes, and the indulgent



goodness which I met with in the heart of another man, formed a contrast which made the virtue of the Precentor appear to me altogether repulsive. Thus it was that for me there existed two species of justice, two sorts of virtue—the one austere and angry, and little amiable; the other merciful, gentle, and calling down blessings on its head.

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But another injury rankled in my breast against the precentor, and that; too, much deeper than all the others. Since I had grown up he no longer resorted to the same arguments which he had used in my earlier days, but his spleen vented itself in violent reproaches, and in remarks characterized by a distrust which began to wound my pride. I merited them, however, up to a certain point; for as there was at the parsonage another man before whom my every action was unveiled, I did not consider myself called on to avow all my motives to the precentor; and thus being already absolved in my own eyes from the reproach of deceit and falsehood, I suffered some malice to mingle with my determination of keeping silent towards him. In thus provoking his anger I drew upon myself a cruel punishment. One fatal word had escaped him, which, while it proved to me the intention of the man to outrage my feelings, had at the same time entirely altered the happy security in which until then I had lived.

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On the occasion of which I am speaking I had appeared to brave his anger, by contrasting the violence of his transports with the patient sweetness of my protector. “He is too good to a foundling,” replied he.

Stupified, I hastened to bury myself in some secluded spot, in order to calm the agitation into which these words had thrown me.

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From that time I shunned his presence, and my happiest days were those during which the labours of the field obliged

him to be absent from the parsonage. Then it was that from earliest morning I felt a sort of confiding security which spread a charm over all my projects, and made me forget even those fatal words which had excited in me so painful an emotion.

And yet sometimes, remembering that this man was Louise's father, I was surprised to find myself cherishing a feeling of involuntary veneration for him, and then even his roughness did not appear an obstacle to my loving him. Carrying this sentiment still further, the more he inspired me with aversion, the more I longed to lessen the distance which separated me from him by affectionate attention, by self-sacrifice, and tenderness, and in fancied anticipation of brighter and more amicable days, I yielded to the promptings of my heart, and in the depths of my solitary retreat I thought of this dreaded man with affection and love.

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While thinking of the precentor I had stretched myself upon my back on the ground, after placing my hat over my face to defend it from the sun.

While lying in this position I felt a light tickling, commencing at the extremity of my thumb and slowly working its way towards the upper portion of my right hand. When we are alone everything is an event. I raised myself into a sitting posture, the better to ascertain the cause of this sensation. It was a little beetle of a beautiful red colour spotted with black, of the species which we call *Pernettes*. He had commenced a tour to investigate the curiosities of my hand, and, having already arrived at the first joint, was tranquilly continuing his travels. I was immediately seized with the desire to do the honours of the country to him, and seeing that he hesitated before the obstacles which presented themselves before him in the shape of the hills and dales formed by the wrinkles of my hand, I took with the other a straw, and adjusted it between my thumb and my forefinger in such a way as to form an admirable bridge. Then, having

guided him a little on his way by barring several passages; I had the inexpressible happiness of seeing him pass on to my bridge, notwithstanding the depth of the abyss below, at the bottom of which the folds of my pantaloons, thrown into strong relief by the sun, must have appeared to him like the ridges of some frightful precipice. I did not perceive, however, that his head grew giddy; but by a mischance, happily of very rare occurrence, the bridge slipped round with its passenger. I redoubled my precautions to turn both back without accident, and my guest soon reached the opposite side, from whence he pursued his journey as far as the nail of my forefinger, which was stained with ink.

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This ink-stain caught my eye, and recalled my thoughts to my protector.

He was the obscure pastor of the little flock which was scattered over the fields around the old Parsonage. When a child I had called him father; as I grew older, observing that he bore a different name from mine, I called him, like every one else, M. Prevere. But since the precentor's words had made me aware of the existence of some mystery, on which I had only recently begun to reflect, M. Prevere had seemed as if completely changed, and had ceased to appear to me as a father, only to assume a much more endearing character. From thenceforward, to the confiding and familiar affection with which his goodness had inspired me, was added a secret veneration, accompanied by a feeling of timid respect. I unceasingly pictured to myself this man, at once so poor and so full of humanity, drawing to him my abandoned cradle. I recalled him to mind, as I grew up, excusing my faults, smiling on my pleasures, frequently giving me indulgent lessons, more frequently still arousing my repentance by the sorrow of his look, and the visible pain which I inflicted upon him by my misdemeanours: at all times watchful to compensate by his tender cares for the inferiority in which I might be placed in the eyes of others by the stigma on

my birth. Remembering also that during so many years he had disdained to betray this secret for the sake of founding on it a claim to my gratitude, I felt my heart penetrated and softened by the liveliest feelings of respect and love.

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But, whilst I felt a stronger affection for him, I had become more timid in manifesting it. Often my heart would swell with gratitude, and I was on the point of throwing myself into his arms, leaving to my tears and my agitation to tell him all that I dared not, or knew not how, to express in words; but as often the restraint which his presence imposed upon me suppressed the display of my feelings, and I remained beside him, embarrassed, silent, and to all appearance more indifferent than usual. Then I felt the necessity of withdrawing from his presence, and, discontented and unhappy, I retired into my solitude. There I pictured to myself a thousand incidents which might give an opportunity of speaking to him, and soon, clothing my ideas with words, I poured forth my soul in the tenderest expressions. But—shall I confess it—more frequently yielding to a strange impulse of my fancy, I loved to imagine myself attacked by some fatal malady, calling that revered man to my bedside, and there, as if the expectation of an approaching and premature death had the power to impart to my words an expression more touching and more truthful, I implored his pardon for all my past faults, I blessed him tenderly for all his cares, all his benefits, I bade him a last adieu, and pouring my whole strength and soul into my words, I enjoyed in imagination the idea of feeling a single tear drop from his eyelid on my upturned face.

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I had recourse again to another expedient, not less extraordinary, but which answered the end no better. I conceived the project of writing to this man whom I saw every day, and to whom I could speak at any moment; and the first time that this idea arose in my mind, it ap-



peared to me a most admirable one. I shut myself up in my own room and composed a number of letters. After I had done this, I selected the one which pleased me the most, and put it in my pocket in order to present it myself on the first opportunity I could find. But from the moment that I had this letter about me, I avoided as much as possible every occasion of being alone with M. Prevere, and if I happened to meet him without a companion, a hasty blush overspread my countenance, and my chief anxiety while I was conversing with him was to crush and destroy at the bottom of my pocket the very paper, which contained that which I so longed to tell him.

But it was not in composing a letter of this kind that I had blackened my fingers with ink on the present occasion. Here is the letter which I had written that same morning, and which I had seated myself beside the pond for the purpose of reading once again.

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“MONSIEUR PREVERE,

“I write to you because I dare not speak to you of these things. Many times I have approached you, but the moment I saw you my words failed me; and yet I longed to tell you what I have in my heart.

“I have felt so for the last six months, Monsieur Prevere—ever since our visit to the mountains, from which Louise and I returned so late. From that time I have not been the same—I can take pleasure in nothing but what is connected with her, and for this reason I fear that you have often found me absent, negligent, and inattentive to my studies. This has been involuntary, I assure you, M. Prevere, and I have made efforts which you would scarcely believe to overcome it; but in the midst of them all, this one idea recurs to me without ceasing, and all sorts of others which I will tell you, and which I fear you will find very extravagant or very blameable. Now that I have told you this, I feel that I shall have the courage to speak openly to you if you question me.

“CHARLES.”

• I read and re-read this letter, fully determined to present it that very day.

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One evening during the preceding autumn, Louise and I had set out to visit the two cows belonging to the parsonage, which were kept during the summer at the chalets half-way up the mountain's side. We took our way by the wood, chatting and jesting as we wandered on, and lingering over every trifle which we met with in our path. In one of the woody dells we stopped to waken the slumbering echoes, and then, hearing the mysterious voice proceeding from the thicket, a sort of terror took possession of us, and we looked at each other in silence as if there was some third person with us in the wood. Then with common consent we took to flight, to halt and laugh at our own fears at some distance off.

We reached in this manner a stream of water sufficiently deep to make the passage of it difficult, at least with dry feet. I immediately proposed to Louise to carry her over to the other side, as I had done a hundred times before. She refused—and while I gazed upon her with surprise, a deep blush overspread her features, whilst a thousand confused impressions at the same time dyed my face in scarlet. It was as if a species of shame, until then unknown, had made us both cast down our eyes. I was planning to form a bridge of large stepping-stones for her to pass over, when, guessing from her embarrassment and her gestures that she wished to take off her shoes and stockings, I started off in advance.

I soon heard the sound of her footsteps behind me, but a sort of indescribable bashfulness prevented me from turning round, and made me fear to meet her eyes. As if we had been both actuated by one common impulse, she avoided this meeting by once more placing herself at my side, and we continued to walk on in silence without again thinking of the chalet, the path leading to which we avoided in order to take one which conducted us back towards the parsonage. •

In the meantime night had gradually overspread the

fields, and the stars were sparkling in the firmament. Some sounds heard in the distance, or the monotonous cry of the cuckoo close at hand, alone broke at intervals the silence of the evening. In those parts of the thicket where the trees were more thinly scattered, we could see the rays of the moon gleaming through the leaves and branches; farther on we relapsed into the deepest obscurity, where the path could scarcely be distinguished from the dark-green turf which skirted its margin. Louise walked close by my side, and some rustling sounds having proceeded from a bush by the road-side, she seized my hand, as if by an involuntary impulse. A feeling of courage immediately took the place of that uneasiness which I had begun to share along with her, and my heart beat with an emotion of pleasure which I had never before experienced.

In the situation in which we were placed, this incident served as a means to dispel our constraint, and possessed something of the sweetness of a reconciliation. There was also joined to it on my side a secret charm, as if she had required my protection, and as if I had been a support to her gentle timidity. Taking advantage of the obscurity which prevented her from perceiving the state of my thoughts, I turned my eyes unceasingly towards her, without being repelled by the impossibility of seeing her features. But in return I seemed to feel her presence better, and I enjoyed with greater delight the tender sentiments which filled my breast.

In this way we reached the margin of the wood, where, once more finding myself beneath the vault of heaven and the bright beams of the moon, I fell into a fresh embarrassment. It appeared to me that I had no longer any pretence for retaining Louise's hand in mine, and on the other hand, I fancied there would be either coldness or affectation in withdrawing my own; so that at that moment I wished heartily that she would herself take her hand away. I drew all sorts of inferences from the slightest and most unintentional movements of her fingers, and the most involuntary tremblings of my own caused me extreme emotion. By the greatest good fortune an inclosure presented itself which obliged us to separate,

and I immediately released Louise's hand, after having experienced so many emotions, as novel as they were deep.

A few moments afterwards we arrived at the parsonage.

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Whilst I was reading my letter for the second time, the sound of a casement opening made me turn my head, and I perceived M. Prevere, who was attentively watching me from the window of his chamber. I immediately destroyed my letter as I had done all the others.

M. Prevere continued to remain with his arms crossed in an attitude of reflection, without calling me to him as he sometimes did in order to give Louise and myself a lesson. Observing that he had on his hat and wore the dress in which he was accustomed to go abroad, I decided upon remaining where I was, in the hope that he would soon leave the window where his presence imposed so great a restraint upon me—a restraint which I did not wish to make apparent to him, by withdrawing myself.

Happily, a friend who had often before rendered me eminent services, came to relieve me from my embarrassment.

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This was Dourak, the dog belonging to the parsonage. He was not handsome, but he had an intelligent physiognomy, and a sort of free and open roughness which gave value to his friendship. From beneath the black shaggy hair which bristled over his head, peeped out two bright eyes, whose rather ferocious look was tamed for me alone into a caressing and submissive expression. For the rest, tall of stature and full of courage, he had often been engaged in affrays; and the preceding autumn, some days after our excursion, he had returned gloriously from the châteaux with all his sheep safe, and one ear missing, which had procured for him the esteem and admiration of the whole hamlet.

It was he who came to seek me. I rose as if to caress him; and, appearing as if I were merely following where-soever he chose to lead me, I proceeded to search for another and more distant place of retreat.



A few paces from the pond was a wall, supporting a sort of terrace on which stood the peaceable parsonage, surrounded by a grove of linden and walnut-trees. Mosses, lichens, and a thousand different species of plants, carpeted this old wall, the approach to which was rendered difficult by the dense mass of trees and shrubs which had grown up in wild luxuriance in that sheltered nook. In some spots where the soil was shallow, the earth was covered with grass alone, thus forming little patches of verdure in the midst of the refreshing shades.

It was in one of these retreats that I proceeded to establish myself. The dog had preceded me, snuffing the ground, and startling away the birds which were concealed amidst the peaceful foliage. As soon as I had seated myself, he came and took up his position in front of me, as if to ascertain by my look what we were going to do.

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This was exactly what I was thinking of myself, when I fancied I heard a slight noise at a short distance from us. I rose immediately, and parting the light and flexible branches which obstructed my view, I beheld the precentor, who was taking his noontide nap stretched at full length upon the ground.

I gazed upon him for a few moments, riveted by a strange curiosity. I found an interest in looking upon this man, thus sleeping and unconscious of my presence, whom I was accustomed to see under a very different aspect. It seemed to me as if the sight of his peaceful slumber purified my heart, and the aversion with which he inspired me appeared to lose itself in a sentiment of respect for his repose. I was therefore in the act of retiring gently, when I was induced to return more gently still by an emotion of indiscreet curiosity.

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The precentor wore a jacket of coarse black cloth, with two large pockets on the outside. I had remarked that

from one of these pockets projected the half of a folded paper having the appearance of a letter. I know not what strange association arose in my mind between this paper and the pensive attitude in which I had so lately beheld M. Prevere, but it was some vague feeling of this kind which inspired my curiosity.

I retraced my footsteps therefore, but now it was with the emotion of a criminal. Trembling at the slightest noise around me, I stopped from time to time to raise my eyes upwards, as if I expected to see some one watching me from among the branches of the trees; and then I lowered them as quickly, in order not to lose sight of the precentor. His short black hair, the robust formation of his throat, his hard and sunburnt features, leaning thus on his large and callous hands, inspired me with a secret fear, and the idea of a frightful awakening struck terror to my imagination.

In the mean time, Dourak, deceived by my air of expectation and emotion, set himself to watch all around, his paw raised and his nostril snuffing the passing breeze, when, at the sound of a lizard gliding among the dry herbage, he made a great bound and fell noisily among the rustling leaves. I stood motionless, whilst a cold perspiration bedewed my forehead.

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My fear was such that I should have retired immediately, had not a new circumstance excited my curiosity in the highest degree. I was sufficiently near the paper to distinguish the handwriting of Louise.

Besides, the tolerably loud noise which Dourak had made not having in the least disturbed the profound repose of the precentor, I was not only freed from my apprehensions, but felt myself encouraged and emboldened. The only remains of my former emotion was a feeling of excessive indignation against Dourak, at which I made many mute gestures of anger, and all sorts of eloquent gesticulations, in order to insure his silence. But perceiving that he took the whole affair in the light of a jest, I made

"a hasty end of my harangue, for I saw, with an emotion of frightful anguish, that he was on the point of making a leap and barking in my face.

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I ventured to advance another step. The letter was not properly folded, but had been negligently crumpled up. The precentor had probably just been reading it, which I surmised from seeing his spectacles lying beside him on the grass.

But I experienced the most delighted surprise when I saw on the outside these words, traced by the hand of Louise:—"To Monsieur Charles." My first impulse was to seize upon the letter as being my own property, my own most precious treasure; then reflecting upon the consequences which might result from this proceeding, I wavered, and a slight nervous movement of the precentor's, occasioned by a fly which had settled on his nostril, served still more to shake my resolution. I endeavoured, therefore, to read the interior of the two leaves, at the same time keeping my eye upon the flies.

There was one of them especially that did me the greatest mischief. Driven away from the temples, it lighted on the nose, only to perch itself subsequently upon the eyebrow. Dourak, seeing the gestures that I made to drive it away, rose and prepared himself for a leap. I abandoned the fly therefore, and returned to the letter, still keeping my eye on Dourak.

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I began by gently blowing between the leaves, in order to separate them, and succeeded thus in reading the words which formed the end of the lines. The first which I deciphered, all unintelligible as they were, caused me the greatest surprise. They were, as follows:—"this letter, you will already be far from—"

The line finished there. I thought I must be mistaken. Who would be far?—far from what?—and I lost my-

self in conjectures. Hoping that the following lines might disclose something more, I renewed my efforts, but with less success than before; for the letter being folded diagonally, every line was consequently shorter than the preceding, and the last left no more than one or two letters visible.

I read disjointed words, fragments of sentences, which, without giving me any further information, plunged me into the deepest anxiety.

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I commenced immediately to peruse the opposite side of the letter, which presented to me the beginning of the following lines exactly in the same way, and I soon passed into transports of jey the sweetest that I had ever experienced. The sense was not complete, but it was even better than being so, for it left me at liberty to fill up according to my own pleasure all that remained unfinished and obscure.

“Yes, Charles,” said she, “I reproach myself now; but the more I felt myself attached to you, the more it seemed as if some invincible embarrassment prevented me from betraying by the least sign what was passing in my heart. But now, my friend, that—”

At these words tears obstructed my view. I paused for a few moments; then, renewing my attempts, I took the two leaves by the ends, in order to separate them and read what followed; when, as if everything that day had concurred to realize my most cherished dreams, I perceived a lock of her hair!

At this moment the precentor suddenly raised his head—I threw myself at full length upon the ground.

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The light left my eyes, and I was breathless with fear. Dourak, surprised at seeing me prostrate, advanced to lick my face. I gave him a tap upon the nose which drew from him a plaintive cry. Then, almost suffocated with shame and vexation, I feigned at all risks to be asleep myself.



But from the moment I closed my eyes I dared not open them again. I perceived plainly, from the profound silence which prevailed, that the precentor was making no movement; but far from supposing that he had again fallen asleep, my imagination pictured him as kneeling beside me, his head leaning over mine, and his suspicious eye searchingly bent upon me to read my deceit in my countenance the moment I should open my eyelids. I saw his raised hand, I heard his abusive language—so that, fascinated by this menacing image, I remained with closed eyes, concealing beneath the most perfect insensibility the extreme agitation which preyed upon me.

At last, making a tremendous effort, I half opened my eyes, and closed them again instantly. Then by degrees I opened them entirely, and turned my head. The precentor had fallen sound asleep again, after having changed his position.

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I was about to rise as gently as possible, when, at the sound of a carriage passing along the road, Dourak started impetuously out of the wood, leaping over the precentor in his way. I fell back with the speed of lightning into my profound repose.

The precentor, disturbed in his slumbers, muttered some indistinct grumblings against the dog. I waited for my turn to come. However, as his voice died away, I had already begun to conceive some hopes, when I felt a heavy weight falling upon my leg. I redoubled the intensity of my sleep, after having been shaken through every limb by a violent start.

I had abundance of time to form conjectures, for the return of all my former terrors kept my eyes closed. At last I felt with alarm that the monster possessed a sensible heat, and, my anguish reaching its height, I looked up. It was the large, heavy, iron hand of the precentor, carelessly, with the whole lower part of the arm attached, stretched over my leg.

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This time I was caught—caught as in a trap. There was no means of either advancing or retreating. Nevertheless, fear supplying me with courage, and the precentor remaining quiet, I began to consider with as much coolness as I could muster what resources my situation afforded. I thought of substituting some artificial support in the place of my leg, and so to withdraw it by degrees and fly. Already, in imagination, I was escaping at my utmost speed, when I heard from the summit of the terrace a voice calling “Charles!” It was that of M. Prevere!

At the same moment Dourak bounded through the wood, pushing violently against me, trampling over the precentor, and filling the air with his barkings.

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The precentor rose, and I also. His first movement was to direct both his eyes and his hand to the pocket which contained the letter, after which we stood looking at each other.

“You here!” he exclaimed.

“Charles!” called M. Prevere a second time. At the sound of this voice the precentor restrained himself, and only added these words—“Go! It will now be settled once for all.”

I hurried off, all trembling.

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In approaching M. Prevere I made a circuit for the purpose of gaining a little time, for the agitation of my countenance was so great that I dared not present myself before him. But as I emerged from the wood, he stood before me.

“It is you whom I was looking for, Charles,” said he; “get your hat; we will take a walk together.”

These words embarrassed me very much, for I had left my hat beside the precentor; and, yet scarcely freed from his terrible look, I had a horrible dread of exposing myself to it again. Nevertheless, not wishing to appear to hesitate,

I returned into the wood ; but surprise and emotion rendered me almost speechless when I saw that the precentor was silently watching us through the foliage of the trees. He approached me, and held out my hat. "Here it is," said he, in a low voice ; "take it and be off."

I took it and hurried away, more disconcerted than ever at the unusual tone of moderation in which he spoke, and at finding that he looked at me without manifesting any feeling of anger.

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I rejoined M. Prevere, and we wandered on together. While I was walking by his side, my agitation gradually subsided ; but in proportion as my mind regained its tranquillity, an anxiety of another kind began to arise in it. The manner of the precentor, the melancholy of M. Prevere, this unexpected walk—all these things, presenting themselves to my mind at the same moment, appeared to be connected together by a sort of mysterious association, and a foreboding expectation arrested my thoughts, impatient as they were to return to Louise's letter.

M. Prevere continued to walk on in silence. At last I glanced furtively towards him, and fancied that I surprised an expression of embarrassment on his features. The immediate effect of this observation was to banish the feeling which I usually laboured under when near him, and I conceived the hope of being enabled at last to speak freely to him. The idea that this man, so deserving of being happy, should be haunted by a secret sorrow, confirmed my courage, by inspiring me with the thought that perhaps he might not disdain to share his grief with me.

"If you have any sorrow, M. Prevere," said I to him, with a deep blush, "will you not judge me worthy of sharing it with you?" "Yes, Charles," he replied ; "I have a sorrow, I will confide it to you, and I believe you to be so worthy of my confidence that I found all my hopes of consolation on the manner in which you will yourself support it. But let us proceed further," added he.

These words perplexed me, and a thousand conjectures rushed through my mind. Nevertheless a feeling of pride mingled with my apprehensions, for the confidence which M. Prevere manifested towards me raised me in my own esteem.

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When we had reached the foot of the mountain, M. Prevere paused. "Let us remain here," said he; "here we shall be alone."

It was a species of enclosure formed by the shelving sides of a worn-out quarry, and was shaded by some overhanging walnut-trees. From this position the surrounding country could be seen stretching out into the distance, sometimes uniform and level and divided into innumerable little enclosures, sometimes mountainous and covered with wood, and intersected by the course of the Rhone. At distant intervals several village spires marked the position of their attendant hamlets, and close at hand the scattered flocks browsed among the surrounding fields. It was here that we seated ourselves.

"Charles," said M. Prevere to me in a calm voice, "if you have ever reflected upon the age at which you have now arrived, you will be the less surprised at what I am about to say to you. Your childhood is ended; and on the employment which you are about to make of your youth depends your whole future welfare. The time has come when your character must be developed by acquaintance with the world, and by associating with your fellow-men; new studies must extend your knowledge and perfect your faculties, in order that, gradually, by your own efforts, your talents, and your honourable conduct, you may be enabled to enter upon that station which Providence shall allot to you here below. But, my dear boy, it is no longer amidst these humble plains—"

I looked at him with alarm.

"It is no longer with me, Charles, that you can expect to find these new resources.—It is necessary that you should leave us."

Here M. Prevere, whose voice had faltered at these



last words, paused for a few moments, while, torn by a thousand contending emotions, I remained motionless. He soon resumed:—

“The duties which bind me to this place prevent me from accompanying you, and guiding your first steps in the world, as I could have wished. But perhaps it may prove a benefit to you, Charles, to fall into more competent hands after leaving my too partial guidance. Where my intelligence and strength might fail, another may be able to exert himself better for your happiness; and I shall rejoice in what he will be enabled to do, without reproaching him for not accomplishing what I could not have done myself. This man, whom you will learn to venerate, is one of my friends. He lives at Geneva, my birth-place, and he will receive you into his house. There you will find an example of many good and virtuous deeds which cannot be afforded here, where the more simple and passive life of the country leaves the nobler qualities of the soul inactive. It is not without a great effort, my dear boy, that I part with you; but, as I have already said, my grief will be less if, like me, you acknowledge the necessity of this separation. Do not deceive yourself. Look beyond your present desires, your present attachments; and never forget that we shall one day have to answer for what we have done, in proportion to our means and our position, towards the perfecting of our own characters and the promotion of the good of our fellow-creatures.”

While M. Preveré was speaking, regret and disappointed hope were busy with my heart, until, as he proceeded, the modesty of his expressions and the noble sentiments expressed in his last words, melted it to tenderness; but I was incapable of uttering a word in reply, and fixing my gaze upon the ground, I forcibly suppressed the tears which started to my eyes. He saw my emotion and proceeded:—

“Besides, Charles, it is only for a few years, after which you can choose for yourself your own career in life. At the end of that time, after you have tried your strength in the world, you will be free to decide between the more brilliant situations which may offer themselves

in the great world or a simple and obscure life like that which you see me filling in this retired spot. I trust that Providence will unite us together again at some future period, and if it should incline your heart to pursue the same career in which I am engaged, this little flock, amongst whom you are so truly loved, may one day pass from my hands into your own."

These last words sent a flash of joy through my heart. I fancied I saw the accomplishment of my most cherished hopes concealed under M. Prevere's words, and instantly my depression was succeeded by transports of energetic courage. I was fired by a new ambition: absence, study, privation, appeared to me even desirable, if they were to render me worthy of Louise, to enable me to return to her, and consecrate to her my whole life.

"M. Prevere," replied I, emboldened by this idea, "your words outstrip my most cherished hopes. But do you really think that I may pursue these plans which you point out, with the hope that Louise will one day share my fate, and that we may spend our lives beside you? Oh! M. Prevere, if I knew that this would be the result of my probation, what would the few years which separate me from the accomplishment of my hopes matter to me, and should I call that a sacrifice which would be, from this day forward, a hope full of charm and happiness!"

As I concluded these words, I saw a cloud of sorrow overshadow M. Prevere's brow, and a painful reply struggle on his lips for utterance. After a moment's hesitation he replied with a look of deep compassion: "No, Charles, I must not deceive you. It is necessary that you should banish these thoughts. Take courage, my child; Louise also will join with me in urging it. Would you wish that she should have to choose between you and the obedience which she owes to her father?"

"Her father!" And instantly a frightful light flashed across me. I comprehended all in a moment—M. Prevere's sorrow, the precentor's manner, and the letter, and how this man had snatched from me even the consolation which his daughter had prepared for me before-

hand. "Her father!" replied I, with bitterness. "Ah! that man has always hated me!"

"Charles!" interrupted M. Prevere, "let us respect his determination; his rights are sacred. Above all, let us guard ourselves, my dear boy, from being led astray by passion, and attributing to him feelings which are far from his heart. Do not attempt to fathom his motives: they may perhaps be ill-founded, without ceasing on that account to be legitimate."

At this ray of light: "I know them!" exclaimed I—"I know them! Ah, Monsieur Prevere!—ah! my benefactor—my father—my only earthly friend!—I am a foundling!" And falling on my knees before him, I buried my face in his hands, to stifle my sighs and conceal my agitation. It was not long before I felt his tears mingling with my own, and some consolation relieving the bitterness of my despair.

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We remained for a long time silent. To my agitation had succeeded a calmer sorrow, and the sight of M. Prevere served to turn aside my thoughts still more from myself.

A profound emotion was imprinted on his venerable countenance, which bore the traces of a sorrow so powerful as completely to master him, notwithstanding his extraordinary command over himself, and his angelic gentleness of disposition. It seemed as if my words had blighted all the fruit of his constant efforts to shelter my youth from even the shadow of humiliation; and as if, overwhelmed by this sudden revelation, he deplored with poignant bitterness the fate of a young man over whom his humanity, and that tenderness which springs from the practice of the most difficult virtues, had so long kept an affectionate guard. I recollected that just now he had endeavoured, even at the expense of that candour which he always so highly cherished, to arrange his remarks so as to avoid this danger. I now saw the cause of his embarrassment, and feeling that I had provoked the grief which I saw weighing him down, by my own impetuous words,

I was penetrated by a sentiment of the deepest compassion. "Monsieur Prevere," said I, in the warmth of my emotion—"Monsieur Prevere, forgive me! On the only occasion when I could show my devotion to you I have failed. Forgive me! I will prove my repentance by my conduct. I will do my best to profit by the advantages which you place before me.—I will love your friend, Monsieur Prevere.—Not a day shall pass without my blessing God for having placed me under your protection—for having made me the happiest of children. I will strive to forget Louise—to love her father—I will depart this very night!"

While I spoke thus, the bitterness of my protector's grief abated, and a feeble ray of pleasure glistened through the tears which trembled on his eyelids. A blush of humble modesty overspread his pale cheeks at the accents of my gratitude, and when my emotion deprived me of the power of utterance, he took my hand and pressed it with a warmth of feeling expressive of esteem and some degree of satisfaction. Then we arose in silence, and sorrowfully retraced our steps to the parsonage.

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I should have wished to meet Louise once again, but we did not see her. The precentor did not appear; the court was deserted. I saw that I alone had been left in ignorance of what awaited me, and I ascended to my chamber to make a packet of some of my clothes; the rest was to be sent after me.

I took down from the wall, where I had hung it, a little drawing of Louise's, which she had allowed me to take a few days before. It represented the pond and the surrounding landscape, with the willow and the scarecrow. I folded it carefully in two, in order that I might place it in the Bible which M. Prevere had given me on my first communion. These two things would recall to me all that I loved on earth.

M. Prevere entered. We were both so much agitated that we delayed, as if by mutual consent, the moment of separation, prolonging the time by indifferent remarks.



At last he placed something in my hand folded up in paper. It was two louis-d'ors and some silver. Then, opening his arms, we mingled our tears together, and remained clasped in a long embrace.

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It was about seven o'clock when I left the parsonage, on an evening the radiant splendour of which only added to my melancholy. In passing near the pond I turned my eyes towards it. It appeared to me dead and barren. I could not help however looking with envy at the three ducks, who were sporting in the evening sunshine over that happy glee where they were assured of dwelling in content and peace; and, remembering the many hours of enjoyment I had passed in their society, I parted from them with lively regret. Soon after I emerged on the high-road.

It was only then that I felt I had really left the parsonage and was alone in the world. A sort of passive dejection had succeeded to the far less bitter emotions of regret and sorrow. Stripped of my past recollections, of my cherished hopes, of every object which had bound me to life, I journeyed towards a new world—towards a populous city; and such was the state of my feelings, that I should have a thousand times preferred to be advancing towards the most arid solitudes. All was a blank in my heart. Everything was shut out from me behind; before me everything was odious. Around me even the inanimate objects themselves, the hedges, the fields, the enclosures which I passed, had changed their aspect, and so far from regretting that I should soon lose sight of them, I quickened my steps in the hope of feeling less wretched when the country should be less familiar to me. My way led through the hamlet, but at the sight of some peasants enjoying the freshness of the evening air in front of their cottages, I took a by-path which rejoined the high-road beyond the village, and I passed the ass belonging to the parsonage who was grazing in a meadow.



Nevertheless, the splendour of the evening, the glowing tints which the landscape wore at that season of the year, and the sight of this old servant who had so often borne Louise under my guidance—all acting together upon my imagination, combined to revive my old impressions, and fill up by degrees the void which I felt in my heart, by recalling to mind events, at first vague and distant, but afterwards more recent and vividly present. At last I came to the morning of that day, to my reveries at the pond, to M. Prevere, to the preecentor, and at last to the letter in which Louise had traced the confession of her heart. At the bare remembrance of those lines I trembled with joy. For a few moments it appeared to me that I was still happy, and I forgot that each step I took was widening the distance between myself and the young girl in whom was centred my whole being.

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I had reached the summit of a little hill. Before descending the opposite side, I once more turned my eyes towards the parsonage, which I was so soon to lose sight of. The sun, now sinking to rest, tinged with a purple light the topmost branches of the linden-trees, and the summits of the antiquated gables of the parsonage, while a bluish shadow wrapped in its transparent mantle the tranquil little valley which separated me from that spot. In the refreshing coolness of the evening hour the grass reared its drooping stems, the insect world was silent, and already several of the birds of night fluttered around the solitary thickets. In the distance a song, wafted towards the ear at intervals—the lowing of a cow—the rolling of a cart, announcing that the labour of the day was over—seemed to form a sweet prelude to the repose of the plains, and to herald the way for the majestic silence of night. By insensible degrees the light of day withdrew from these sweet valleys, and the glowing colours of the fields faded into a pale mellow twilight. At this sight I felt my heart so full of emotion that I seated myself by the road-side. On the point of leaving this spot, I felt an inde-

scribable charm mingle with these impressions, as if each had addressed me in a language which spoke of the past, lulling my sorrow into a sort of vague and melancholy tenderness.

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At this moment the village clock struck eight. The well-known sound, striking on my ear when in this mood of feeling, served still more to transport me again in imagination to the parsonage. I felt as if I were present in the midst of the circle which at that hour usually assembled upon the antiquated terrace to enjoy the beauty of the summer evenings—sometimes joining in calm and peaceful conversation, always ennobled in its character by the simple yet elevated sentiments of M. Prevère—sometimes silent and contemplative before the majestic grandeur of the heavens. I loved these moments still more ever since a new emotion had imparted a deeper seriousness to my thoughts, in which, by a mysterious association, the image of a God full of goodness, and that of a young girl beaming with celestial purity, were mingled together. At this hour, too, the darkness serving to conceal the expression of our countenances, our mutual timidity changed to more happy freedom of manner; and if, when we seated ourselves on the bench, we happened to find ourselves side by side, the obscurity betrayed neither our bashfulness nor our delight. Then I felt the folds of her dress touch my hand, sometimes her sweet breath fan my cheek, and I believed that it was impossible to enjoy a greater felicity upon this earth.

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A farm wagon, which I heard ascending the opposite side of the hill, aroused me from my reverie, and, instantly remembering the lateness of the hour, I rose to resume my journey. Scarcely had I lost sight of the parsonage for a few moments when my heart began to swell with sorrow. The wagon passed me; but when, having

turned round to gaze after it, I saw it about to disappear behind the hill and leave me solitary and alone, my tears began to flow. I entered a field, and throwing myself upon the grass, my grief burst forth in burning sobs. As I thought of Louise, about to be separated from me for ever, I uttered incoherent exclamations of grief. "Ah, Louise!" I murmured in my despair; "Louise! you who loved me!—Louise! why did I ever know you!—and you too, Monsicur Prevere!" Then sinking back for a moment into silence, the most extravagant projects presented themselves to my mind, suspending my tears, until they were shipwrecked against the insurmountable obstacle of my respect for those very persons against whom they were devised.

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When I rose, night had long overspread the fields, and I heard no sound but the distant murmur of the river. Two leagues still remained for me to traverse before I could reach the village which M. Prevere had marked out, and where I was to sleep at the house of one of his friends. At this hour I should not find any one up, I would be obliged to rouse the family from their beds, and the idea of seeing any one appeared to me insupportable. I began to consider whether I could not pass the night where I was. On the morrow, which was Sunday, I could set out before daybreak and reach the town by nightfall, without being compelled to associate with any one but my own thoughts. This project, which beguiled my grief, was soon decided upon, and I walked towards the hedge to make choice of a shelter for the night.

But while I was thus searching for my lodging, the idea of returning to the parsonage presented itself to my mind. The reflection that by so doing I should be deceiving M. Prevere, made me at first renounce this design. Nevertheless, I returned mechanically towards the road, and slowly retraced my steps to the summit of the hill. There I began to make compromises with myself, all the while advancing; and although fear and con-

science urged me every moment to pause, I continued to add step to step. At last I found myself once more on the margin of the pond.

How all was changed! Far from finding again in this place the illusions which I had sought to enjoy a few moments longer, I experienced only the bitter impression of finding myself henceforth a stranger to it. All was cold, the charm of enchantment was broken, and the very objects which had heretofore caused me the most pleasure, were those whose sight now wounded me most deeply. I determined upon once more withdrawing, no longer knowing what to do with myself.

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I had already retraced my steps for a short way, when I saw a faint light glimmering through the foliage of the linden-trees. I approached it as gently as possible, and perceived that the light issued from Louise's chamber. I remained motionless, my eyes fixed upon the modest wainscoted wall on which her shadow was thrown, while at the sense of her presence everything both within me and around me assumed fresh life.

Louise was seated before a little table placed near the window. I concluded that she was at that moment occupied in writing, and the hope that these lines were destined for me threw a ray of consolation over my grief. But while I was watching with eager curiosity the slightest motion of her shadow, she herself, having risen, presented herself to my view. Then, as if the winning beauty of this young girl had for the first time struck upon my sight, a feeling of rapturous tenderness thrilled through my heart, mingling with the sweet emotions which her letter had left in it. She stood thus for some moments, during which I could perceive from the sorrowful expression of her countenance, that we were still united by the tie of a common grief. Then having turned towards the mirror, which was suspended above the table, she unfastened her beautiful hair, which fell floating over her shoulders. I had never seen her in an attitude of such



unstudied grace. I experienced therefore a secret agitation, in which pleasure mingled with the shame of having surprised her in such a position, and I immediately retired beneath the spreading foliage of the linden-trees which veiled her from my view.

At that moment I heard the sound of a door opening in the court-yard, and immediately afterwards the precentor appeared with a light in his hand. I would have fled, but fear deprived me of the power of motion, and I could only drag myself towards the little wall which enclosed the church-yard. After having scaled it I crouched down on the other side, uncertain whether or not I had been perceived.

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The precentor at first paused under Louise's window as if to ascertain that she had not yet retired to rest; then, attracted perhaps by the noise which I had made, he renewed his search. From the place of my concealment I could see the light, which, glancing across the gables of the roof, warned me that he was approaching. Then, creeping along the grass, I reached the door of the church, which I gently closed behind me.

There I began to breathe once more. Looking through the chinks of the old door at what was passing without, I soon perceived that the precentor, having extinguished his light, was pursuing his way gently through the darkness, searching on every side and pausing to listen to the slightest noise. He returned slowly, and shortly afterwards some sounds which I heard on that side of the church in which his abode was situated, informed me that he had entered his house again. From the profound silence which then prevailed, I concluded that I was the only one awake about the parsonage, and I thought myself saved.

My fear was still too recent for me to dare to leave the place immediately, and besides I knew not where to go. I decided therefore upon passing two or three hours in the church and leaving it before daybreak; and I proceeded



to instal myself in the seat which Louise always occupied. The clock struck one. I was overcome with fatigue, so that, after struggling against the feeling for a time, I ended by stretching myself upon the bench, and sleep soon stole over me.

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I was awakened by a loud noise. It was the church-bell which was summoning the congregation to worship. I started up, and the shock depriving me of all presence of mind, I began to wander hurriedly round the church without knowing whither to direct my steps. In a short time the sound of the bell was succeeded by a silence still more alarming. I heard a key turning in the door which opened from the vestry, upon which I flew into the gallery and hid myself behind the organ.

It was the precentor who came to mark the verses and prepare the pulpit. Through the door which he had left open, I heard the voices of the parishioners who were already assembling under the linden-trees. When he had rejoined them, I remembered that, on account of some repairs which it was undergoing, the organ would not be played that Sunday, and I proceeded to hide myself in a niche formed between the projection of the keys and the sides of the instrument. I adjusted the seat, which had been taken down, so as to face the benches from which I could be perceived, and resigned myself to await my fate, regretting a thousand times that I had not hearkened to the voice which, on the preceding evening, forbade me to retrace my steps.

Soon afterwards several persons entered, the gallery began to fill all around me, and, as if to render my distress the greater, the audience was much larger than usual. However I remarked a sort of preoccupation among the congregation which might prove favourable to me; and when I gathered from what I heard that I myself was in some measure the object of it, curiosity for a few moments suspended my alarm.

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The persons around me were speaking of my departure, of M. Prevere, of the precentor. No one blamed the latter, some pitied Louise, others thought that M. Prevere had been wrong to bring me up along with her. One voice added—"You see a bad egg makes a bad bird." "That is sure enough," replied another voice; "the strollers did not know what to do with him, and so they dropped him there. M. Prevere might have found out who they were if he had chosen, the more by token that somebody told him that Claude, when returning from the chalet, had seen the mother up in the woods; but he would not let anybody pursue her. So that is the way the child was left in his charge."

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"It was a good deed, too," replied another man. "'The Almighty has sent him to me,' says M. Prevere to himself. 'Shall I restore him to these vagrants, that they may throw him into some pit?'—so he kept him. Was that wrong? For my part I say no—for those who have the means. Granted that the lad has neither father nor mother, and that I would not give him my daughter—for all that, there is a beggar less in the world. And besides, look you, to say the truth, Master Charles was a good lad!" And immediately these same peasants, whose selfish prejudices I saw for the first time openly displayed, began to speak in my praise with a warmth which I could not suspect of insincerity. I was surprised at this; for I was then ignorant that in the same mind there may exist together the harshest prejudices and a natural kindness of feeling. Nevertheless, their words touched me, and poured some balm into my lacerated heart.

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At this moment Louise entered and was followed a few moments after by M. Prevere. Immediately all conversation ceased, and an unusual silence reigned throughout the church. While M. Prevere was ascending the steps

of the pulpit, all eyes were fixed upon him; from thence they passed to the precentor, and afterwards turned to Louise. The young girl, at all times so timid, had drooped her head, and the projecting shade of her bonnet concealed her blushes and her agitation from the scrutiny of the observers.

M. Prevere commenced by reading the beautiful prayer of the liturgy which opens public worship, after which the chanting of the psalms began. Contrary to his usual custom, he did not join his own voice to that of his flock; but having seated himself he appeared sorrowful and dejected. He frequently cast his eyes towards the seat where he was in the habit of seeing me, but which now remained vacant, and as often as he could do so without attracting the attention of his congregation, he turned a compassionate glance towards Louise. The chanting ceased, and after the second prayer, in which some of the expressions excited peculiar attention, M. Prevere opened the Bible and read these words—“*Whosoever receiveth this little child in my name receiveth me.*” Then he spoke as follows:—

“MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,

“Permit me this day to interrupt the ordinary course of our instructions. I desire to impress on your minds some truths which it is no longer right to conceal from you. May you listen to them with humility—may they pass from my lips free from every stain of passion or bitterness!

● “It is now seventeen years ago since our attention was attracted, about eleven o’clock at night, by the cries of an infant. It was in the court-yard of this very parsonage. You, Pierre, and you also, Joseph, remember it, as you happened to be there at the time. It was a poor little creature swathed in rags, and shivering with cold. We took it in, we warmed it, and we sought for it a nurse among the mothers of this parish. No one refused, but no one offered themselves; and from that night our goat, my brethren—our goat gave him milk!

“God in his goodness permitted him to derive health

and strength from the bosom of this poor animal. But he received none of those tender cares which belong to his age: on the contrary, instead of the caresses which you lavish on your children, a malignant curiosity surrounded his cradle, and scarcely had he entered into life before the burden of a barbarous prejudice weighed down his innocent head. Am I wrong in saying this? Do you not remember that this motherless babe could with difficulty find among you a man who would consent to give him his name, or present him at the baptismal font!

“He grew up. His good qualities and his amiable and generous character found favour amongst you. You loved him, you welcomed him to your houses, you treated him with kindness, and my grateful heart blessed you for every succeeding instance of your goodness. Alas! I deceived myself. You loved him, but you never forgot the stain which you imputed to his birth. You loved him, but he was ever in your eyes *the foundling*. As such, in the pride of your hearts, you despised him. It was by this name you spoke of him in your conversations; it was thus he learned that which it was so important to keep concealed from him; it was thus that humiliation withered his youthful heart and poisoned his brightest days. Yes, you loved him; but if Providence, granting my most cherished hopes, had willed that this young man should seek to settle in this place—my brethren! not one of you, perhaps, would have given him your daughter!

“I foresaw this,” continued M. Pævere, in a faltering voice; “and I have sent him to a distance. Shall I add that, already bordering on the confines of old age, I am left alone—separated from him who would have rendered its approach less sorrowful? God forbid! I have lost the companion of my life whom I had chosen; I have seen the only child that God had given me snatched away—I had no right to reckon upon this blessing more than upon the others.

“Enough of him, my brethren—enough of myself. My hopes are centred in heaven; his are directed there too. My grief, my affright, do not flow from this source. But I ask myself, where am I placed? What is the re-



“sult of my labours among you? Whither have I led you? What account shall I render to thee, O my God, if, after twenty years of my ministry, such is the state of the souls which thou hast confided to my care, that a barbarous pride stifles in them the exercise of the most simple duties—the pleasures of the most natural compassion? O Jesus! how can we look to thee for an example? What can we reply to thy heavenly teachings? Where is that charity to which thou promisest everything—without which none can hope to enter thy Father’s kingdom? Thou hast committed to this people the care of one of those little ones whom thy goodness recommended to those who love thee, and he has not been able to find amongst us a mother, a friend, a home; and he has been forced to fly, stigmatized and discouraged, to seek among strangers that which has been denied him here! Will he find it even there? Alas! you, who are only simple countrypeople—you, who have seen him grow up among you—you who have known and have loved this unfortunate boy—you have rejected him! Judge therefore for yourselves what must await him in the heart of cities, in the midst of social distinctions, among strangers who know not his virtues as you do, and who will only too soon discover what was his birth. To thy protecting care alone, O Lord! can we commit him. For ourselves, we might have sheltered him; but we have left it undone.

“Charity—humility—heavenly virtues! are you then too pure for this earth? Have you reascended with our Saviour to the celestial abodes? In former times, among the crowds of cities, I have met with men who devoted themselves to your sublime worship. Nevertheless, from these rare examples my sorrowful eyes turned with hope towards the country, and I fondly imagined that these peaceful fields would have been your asylum. Bitter misreckoning! Here also you are disowned—forgotten; here also the peasant, the labourer, the working man—near as they are to the dust from whence they sprung—pride themselves on their birth, and despise the child for the sins of his parents!



“Let the foundling fly, then, to another neighbourhood; let him present himself at other doors! Here the happy repulse the unhappy, the poor reject the poor, families, rejoicing in every blessing, discard the friendless who has no family. Ah! my brethren, my dear brethren! What! with so little time upon this earth, shall we thus misapply it? With so few opportunities for the practice of virtues, shall we leave unemployed the sweetest and the most noble? With the sublime example before us of a Divine Master who mercifully raised up even the adulterous woman, shall obscure mortals display so much pride and harshness as to abuse a youth whose conduct has always been distinguished by truth and rectitude?”

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“I have spoken harshly to you, my dear parishioners, and yet I am but a sinner like yourselves. Forgive me. After so long a silence, these words have escaped from my lips with too little restraint, and you weep—Ah! suffer your tears to flow; they will not prove barren to your souls, and to me they are sweet indeed. In dropping thus upon my heart they wash away the bitterness of its wounds, so long endured in silence—they leave behind them the hope that henceforth you will recognise in the poor, the unhappy, and the foundling, the friend of Jesus, the guest whom He has sent you, the child whom He has recommended to your love.

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“If such should be the result of my words, I would indeed little regret their harshness; much rather would I bless God for having imparted to them so salutary an influence. Then, believing that the reward promised to the charitable was thenceforth assured to you, I should with less anxiety approach the termination of my own career. Oh, my beloved parishioners! let us enter without delay into the ways of peace and safety; let us put to a profitable use the remainder of our days; let us advance towards the tomb full of good works; and when our perishable bodies shall be consigned to their parent dust, may we be accepted by our Sovereign Judge

“—you, for having reformed your hearts; and I, for having led to Him my little flock, the object of all my affections on this earth.”

When I again raised my head, I no longer saw Louise. The precentor, weighed down with sorrow and anguish, hung his head and wept; while through the tears which flooded my eyelids, M. Prevere appeared to me like some celestial being, at whose feet I could have prostrated myself and kissed them with adoration. I had comprehended the piety, the virtue, the beauty of self-denial; and before hope could come to soften my heart I hastened to quit the place as soon as I could do so without being perceived.

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Three days afterwards I received the following letter from Louise's father:—

CHARLES,

Yesterday, at the preaching, M. Prevere spoke of you, and said things which gave me pain, coming from such a respectable pastor. Then, after service, having found him alone at the Acacias, I took his hand, being scarcely able to speak, my heart was so full. “Speak, my old friend,” said he; “did you think me too severe?”—“It is not that,” said I; “but I have repented since morning—indeed ever since yesterday evening, Monsieur Prevere. This is the Lord's day; I will not take the sacrament till he has returned. Give him Louise.”

We then embraced one another, and I felt that I had done right; for which I thank God for having enlightened me in time. M. Prevere had a talk with me afterwards. It was to say, that you must remain down yonder all the same and learn a profession. He intends to write to you, and so will Louise, after she has heard from you.

In pledge of which, Charles, I send you my watch as a present, as I received it, in my turn, from my father. Jean Ronaud has cleaned it, and he recommends that, at night, you should not lay it flat, but hang it to a nail, which is better for the works.

Farewell, Charles. Be a good lad, and diligent.

REYBAZ.



## BOOK SECOND.

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AFTER M. Prevere's sermon, I left the parsonage almost without any effort. The words of affection and esteem with which this venerable man had publicly honoured my youth, that charitable compassion of which I only then fully comprehended either the extent or the elevation, and lastly, the spectacle of an entire auditory moved to tears by my fate, had, in deeply touching my heart, recalled it to both life and hope. And when I came to reflect that Louise had been a witness of all—that in her presence M. Prevere's voice had taken up my defence and pronounced my eulogy—that, unable to control her emotion, she had retired to conceal her agitation and her tears—then joy and triumph swelled my heart, and, my soul overflowing with the sweetest sensations, I departed from the parsonage as happy as if I had not a wish on earth ungratified.

When I entered the city, the sight of the passing crowds and the novelty of the different objects saddened me by withdrawing me from my most cherished thoughts. I presented myself at the house of M. Prevere's friend. His name was Dervev. He was a man of about fifty years of age, whose open countenance and affectionate manners in some degree relieved the embarrassment which I experienced. He installed me in the little chamber which I was henceforth to occupy; and after having questioned me upon some points, and given me sensible advice upon others, he informed me of the usual routine pursued in his household, and the manner in which my time would be employed. I was to pursue a certain course of studies under his own direction, and, for the rest,

attend the usual public classes of the town. When he left me I occupied myself in arranging my effects; and, the following morning, I commenced my new mode of life. But in proportion as the hours glided past and the vivid impression of the scene of the preceding Sunday faded away, my melancholy resumed its empire over me, and I relapsed by degrees into the same state of dejection and discouragement from which I had been withdrawn by a passing joy.

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On the third day after my arrival, as I sat engaged in a sorrowful reverie, I heard some one ascending the staircase. At the idea of M. Dervev, perhaps, coming to surprise me before I had even begun the labours of the day, I hastily seized my pen, and opening my books at random, I awaited his entrance with the most studious air that I could assume; when, instead of entering at once, the person began to snuff under the door and scratch at the panels. I ran to open it—instantly chairs, tables, dictionaries, were overturned and scattered over the floor of my little apartment. It was Dourak, incapable of moderating the transports of his joy at beholding me, leaping, gambolling, barking, as if he had been in the open fields. His black eye sparkled with delight, and he swept with his bushy tail the furniture, the books, and even the walls. Ashamed at the confusion he was creating, I lifted up the different articles in succession, until at last, carried away by his transports, I ended by yielding myself up to all the charms of the interview.

In a few minutes the shepherd belonging to the parsonage entered. “Antoine!” I exclaimed, throwing myself upon his neck. “It does me good to see you again, Monsieur Charles,” said he; “for, faith, we have missed you very much yonder!”—“And M. Prevere and Louise?” “Oh! I bring you news of them. Here is a box, and a letter along with it.” “Leave me then, Antoine, and return by-and-by.”

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On the address of the letter I had received I recognised the handwriting of the precentor, and surprise and fear as well as curiosity agitated me by turns, until, having perused the first words of that simple letter, my heart was assailed with the liveliest emotions of joy and gratitude, and, bursting into tears, I remained plunged in a state of vague ecstasy, of which each of the three personages to whom I owed so much happiness was in turns the object. Moments of entrancing joy!—moments, so rare in life, when the glad announcement of a happiness most ardently desired, is heightened by the charm of gratitude—when every loving and generous emotion finds food for enjoyment and exercise!

Shall I confess it?—for the first few moments all my gratitude was for the precentor. The sacrifice which this proud and self-opinionated man had made in my favour, the power of religious principle over his sturdy soul, the masculine vigour of his true and simple piety, inspired me with an admiration which my gratitude enhanced beyond measure, and when I saw this very man afterwards strip himself of his old father's watch, as if to seal by this touching proof of his confidence the gift which he was bestowing on me in his daughter, I forgot, in the transports of my gratitude and admiration, even M. Prevero, the moving cause of all—even Louise, the object of my dearest thoughts.

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During this scene I had entirely forgotten the presence of Dourak, who had quietly squatted down in front of me, and was following with his watchful eyes my slightest movement.

Happiness, it is said, opens the heart, and joy is akin to folly. In the delicious calm which followed the first moments of my agitation, my eyes, swimming in tears, happened to meet the loving look of the affectionate animal, who had never ceased beating the floor with his tail, with more or less vigour in proportion as he fancied he read in my features more or less pleasure. At this look I recalled to mind all our adventures of bygone days, our sports, our dangers, and our expeditions; my heart

warmed towards this faithful creature, who had thus served as the messenger of my new happiness; and in the necessity which I felt of giving vent to the joy and gratitude which overflowed my heart, I forgot that he was a dog, and I remembered only our friendship. Whilst he filled the air with his joyous barkings, and actually trembled with delight, I lavished upon him the most tender caresses. "And you, too, my poor Dourak!" I exclaimed, "you bring me this happy news!—you, too, my old, my trusty, friend!" And then submitting to his caresses, as I had been accustomed to do when we gambolled together in the fields, I was abandoning myself to all the vivacity of his transports, when—when M. Dervev entered!

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At the novelty of this spectacle M. Dervev knew not exactly what to say, and I still less. I held Dourak back, who would have darted upon him, and endeavoured in some degree to repair the disorder, which the dog, whose excitement it was difficult to calm, renewed almost immediately. "What is all this?" said M. Dervev, at last; "this ink—these books—this overturned table?"

"Oh, what a fine mess you have made here!—a pretty piece of work!" exclaimed Antoine, who crouched close behind him, and who burst into a roar of laughter. "And, pray, who are you?" asked M. Dervev. "I am Antoine, the shepherd, my good sir." "What are you doing here with this dog?" "I am waiting for the answer, my good sir, and the dog too." "The answer?—what does all this mean?"

"Sir," replied I, timidly, "it is a letter which the shepherd of the parsonage has brought me. The dog preceded him, and I was not able to restrain the leaps of joy he made at seeing me; but I will repair all the mischief, Monsieur Dervev." "That is the whole truth, my good sir," added Antoine, who saw that I was still trembling.

"Well, well—say no more! I can easily understand that a dog of that size—but another time—" "Make yourself easy, my good sir," said Antoine, "another

time I will not bring him with me." "I do not say that; bring him, but take precautions to prevent a repetition of this disorder." At this moment M. Dervev gained not only my heart, but the shepherd's also, who, the better to show his good intentions, bestowed a kick on poor Dourak's ribs.

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Here opens in my life an interval of happiness to which my thoughts unceasingly recur, attracted by that charm which their youthful days always possess for those who have already passed the meridian of life. Days too quickly passed, in which our feelings, then in all their native freshness, are heightened and embellished by the most delightful illusions—in which all is anticipation, all is hope—in which nothing is as yet blighted by experience, nor chilled by time or reality!

Seventeen years have glided past since that period, not without bringing with them the usual tribute of troubles, evils, and deceptions, which are the inevitable lot of man; but they have not effaced the brilliant hues of those happy days, and when I look back on this road of life over which I am journeying, I see them still tinging with their golden rays the summits of those distant hills which I shall never tread again.

Sometimes, though at long intervals—above all, when the storm rages without, and the rain is falling on the deserted fields—an indescribable feeling of poetry—sweet, yet at the same time most sorrowful—seems to diffuse itself around me, and invite me to reverie. My dwelling then becomes more dear to me; and, taking up my position at the window, I wish that the storm may last, that it may prolong my leisure, and that no troublesome intruder may come to disturb the fragile calm which I enjoy. Then, whilst my eyes wander with an uncertain gaze over the face of the country, half-hid in its watery veil—whilst my ear, vaguely attentive, follows the cadenced drip of the water from the eave—my heart reascends the stream of life; it flies back to long-departed days; it pauses over those happy times; and, gently cradled on the wing of recollec-

tions and regrets, it feasts with delight on sweet and melancholy thoughts. It is in such moments that I open a certain drawer, and, unfolding the letters it contains, I find in them again the still living traces of the time of which I speak. But soon these recollections assume too vivid a reality, my regrets become embittered, my heart swells—I close the drawer, and the remainder of my day is spent in gloom and dejection.

Each time I half resolve that it shall be the last. “Of what use,” I have thought to myself, “is it to arouse bitter regrets by dwelling on the image of departed happiness?—why sacrifice to the illusions of a moment that tranquillity which already boasts so little cheerfulness and has been so dearly purchased?—what do I gain by this delusive converse?” But the heart, ingenious at self-deception, returns with invincible tenacity to the objects which have stirred its deepest chords. I no longer open the drawer, but I retrace the memories of my early youth—tasting in this occupation a pleasure which makes me wish to prolong it still farther. I would pursue the task. My lips have but touched the margin of the cup; I would drink it to the bottom; but before draining the bitter dregs, let me, at least, taste once more of those drops of sweetness which it contains!

It is this which induces me to publish these letters. They will connect the preceding narrative with that which is to follow. This is no romance, and whoever expects to find in these pages the conflict of violent passions and the excitement of powerful emotions, or that rapid succession of adventures which by turns excites and satisfies curiosity—will find themselves disappointed. To myself it is this cup of which I have spoken, this nectar of by-gone days, of which even the dregs are not without their perfume: for others, it is a picture in which may be recognised, perhaps, some of those traits which characterize my country—small, indeed, but dearly beloved; its scenery, its morals, its faith, as well as that poetry of the heart and of the passions which exists beneath the veil of all its puritan coldness, and which will continue to exist as long as it retains its primitive manners unaltered.



I will, however, make a selection among these letters. Although it was love which inspired them, and invested them with all their charm for us, yet our attachment was of too timid a nature to manifest itself very freely, and too deep-seated to find expression in words. Thus it most frequently happens that, satisfied with the privilege of conversing together, and jealous of seeing that sympathy of thought, which is the sweetest enjoyment that can be tasted by two lovers, established between our hearts, our letters are filled with conversations on those thousand subjects so natural to youthful curiosity, and which awakened the first attempts at reflection. Hence many of these pages depict the impressions of the young man who wrote them much better than they paint the objects which were the occasion of them.

In fact, transplanted at once from the retirement of the country to the heart of a populous city, I was deeply struck with the novelty of the objects and the ideas which daily presented themselves to my thoughts. My task was to read, but my enjoyment was to scrutinise everything that passed around me—to observe, to form my own deductions, and, after peace was restored to my mind, I gave myself up wholly to this attractive study. Besides, I had a powerful motive for doing so. Louise, detained by her duties in the country, curious as well as myself, and her mind far more developed than my own, took a lively interest in all the remarks which I made; and her letters frequently contained questions to which it was my greatest happiness to reply. This sweet necessity, in affording to my leisure hours a delightful occupation, gradually enabled me to write with less awkwardness. However, without experience, without the means of drawing comparisons, writing hastily, often more desirous of pleasing Louise than of carefully weighing my own opinions, I made a thousand erroneous observations, a thousand lapses of judgment, which I allow to remain, well convinced that if these letters possess any interest, it will be found in the very defects which reveal the youth, the situation, the simplicity, and inexperience of their authors.



## I.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

MADEMOISELLE,

*Geneva, July.\**

Antoine has handed me a letter from your father, which has thrown me into a state of happiness impossible to express. This letter speaks of things which I had not even dared to desire, as being far above either my position or my deserts, and of which, therefore, I should have still less dared to speak. Until you shall have confirmed them, I fear to allow myself to believe in their truth, and it seems unbecoming in me to speak to you of all my happiness as if it were certain and assured.

But what I may say to you, Louise, is that I was much to be pitied before I received that letter, and that now I have more happiness than I can enjoy at once. I no longer know precisely what I am doing or what I am writing. There are moments when this happiness seems impossible, for it is too delightful; at other times again, when I fancy that I have your permission to hope, I weep for joy, I talk aloud to myself, and sometimes I even leap through my chamber like a madman.

I feel that I can have no rest until I receive your letter. If you keep me waiting for it long, I shall imagine that all is over between us; but even so, I have no right to complain, and I shall continue to love you as long as I exist.—I am, Mademoiselle Louise,

Your obedient and affectionate

CHARLES.

P.S.—Have the goodness to hand the enclosed letter to your father.

\* This second book embraces a period of about eighteen months. The letters follow, without interruption, from the month of July till the end of the following May, when the correspondence is suspended during the stay of Charles at the parsonage. In October Charles returns to town, and the correspondence is resumed and carried on till the close of the year.

## II.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

MONSIEUR REYBAZ,

*Geneva.*

While I write to you I weep with gratitude, and I am utterly unable to express my feelings. Never before have I experienced what I feel at this moment, and words therefore fail me; and yet it is the only means I have at present to testify my sense of all that I owe you. But do me the justice to believe that I shall devote my entire life—Monsieur Reybaz! You consent, then, to be my father!—you, whom I have so often offended! I know that it is from religion and pity for me, that you pardon me; but I shall never be satisfied until it is from friendship, and because I deserve it.

I am going to begin my studies with the greatest courage; for now I require a profession more than ever. I have already made a commencement, and I only wait for M. Prevere's advice to decide in what direction to proceed.

The watch shall never leave my possession—never, Monsieur Reybaz! Pray thank Jean Renaud, and tell him that it goes admirably.

Your very respectful and affectionate

CHARLES.

## III.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

LOUISE came to my chamber yesterday, and without saying a word handed me your letter. Perceiving that modesty and emotion prevented her from confiding in me freely, I spent a few moments in reassuring her; I then spoke to her of what has passed, of herself, of you; I satisfied myself that her sentiments towards you are in accordance with the intentions which her father has declared in your favour; and lastly, I made her acquainted

with a circumstance which her father had thought it his duty to conceal from her, and of which you yourself are ignorant—viz.: the step taken by M. Ernest De la Cour, who, on the very evening of your departure, asked M. Reybaz for Louise's hand. M. Reybaz, from motives which are entirely personal to himself, and before he had come to any decision respecting you, refused this request, judging it prudent at the same time not to speak of the matter to his daughter. But I could not take upon myself to allow Louise to contract an engagement with you without first making her acquainted with the refusal which had been given in her name, and thus giving her an opportunity of deciding whether, in fully acquiescing in this rejection, she could renounce freely and without regret so brilliant a destiny as that which M. De la Cour's offer opened to her. Upon this point she declared her sentiments so decidedly and so firmly as to set the matter completely at rest. When separating, Louise asked me if I would reply to your letter for her, and I thought it was my duty not to refuse her, feeling the embarrassment which so modest a young girl must experience in writing on such a subject. You may therefore from this day forth consider Louise's attachment as certain, and rely upon her assent to her father's engagement.

My dear boy, I see in all this the accomplishment of my dearest wishes. I thank God for it from my inmost soul, and I feel assured that your heart has not waited until now to testify its profound gratitude to Him. I hope that, by the help of His goodness, and the uprightness of your own sentiments, you will be enabled to comprehend the nature of that new task which is now confided to you—what sacred duties from this moment devolve upon you—some to be fulfilled immediately, and others for which you ought to prepare yourself beforehand. A father, whom a prejudice—unjust and cruel no doubt, but deeply rooted and universally palliated—induced to repulse you, without rendering himself at the same time chargeable with the slightest blame; a man whom you have often offended; naturally anxious too in his old age to build up the happiness of his

'only child upon the support and protection of a family, upon a fortune realised, upon a son-in law of his own choice—sacrifices his prejudices, forgets his anger, renounces his just and well-founded pretensions, and confides to you the fate of a cherished child! Charles, is it necessary for me to say more? 'No; I know that your heart comprehends the noble task which it has to fulfil; I am certain that so much goodness, so much forgetfulness of self, so much true greatness, in a man so simple and obscure, must have touched you deeply; that his conduct on this solemn occasion will remain engraven on your heart as an example always to be imitated—as an incitement, a thousand times more sacred for you than for any other, to devote yourself to the happiness of him who has thus made himself your father. '

Shall I speak to you of Louise—that pure and gentle spirit, that modest and compassionate young girl, who is attracted towards you by the very prejudices which repel others? Sweet and sensible child! Her days flowed on tranquil and serene; sheltered in the bosom of this shady retreat, her life was passed in peace and contentment; by an assured road she was gently pursuing the way of happiness; no trouble, no danger, no storm, menaced her innocent existence. This is the existence of which you are made the depository, which is henceforth united with your own, for which you are from this moment responsible to her, to her father, to me, but above all to God, who is now heaping upon you his choicest blessings in the inestimable gift of a virtuous and amiable wife. I know, Charles, that these reflections will appear to you superfluous; your heart, overflowing with joy and gratitude, with warm and tender affections, is at the same time full of courage, of strength, and of the virtuous transports which these generous sentiments are calculated to arouse; everything appears to you possible, easy, sweet, and full of attraction. But, alas! this is the illusion of happiness and youth. No career, my dear boy, is without its evil days, without its obstacles, its sacrifices, its sorrows. 'No heart is sheltered from seductions, from struggles, from languor; no situation in life is uniformly untroubled or happy.'



Moderate, therefore, these transports; mistrust this too confident courage; count upon realities and not upon the illusions of a day; and from this moment let a feeling of duty—of a duty imperious, irresistible, sacred as the will of God himself—establish in your heart its powerful empire; let it rule there without a rival; let it ever defend you from those rocks upon which they suffer shipwreck who, without measuring their own strength, abandon themselves to the illusions which now entrance you with their charm. Then, and then alone, will my utmost wishes be accomplished; then shall I bless, as I have so often done, the day which placed you in my hands; then shall I possess a guarantee for Louise's fate, and my closing days will be gilded with every ray of happiness which shines upon yours. •

Such, my dear boy, is what I wished to say to you. However, God forbid that I should tarnish your joy! Enjoy it to its fullest extent; partake it with me, for your happiness is mine also. You are aware that I have no other. May it be durable! May you, my dear child, never know the wounds which have torn my heart. May you ever remain ignorant of the deep regret, the bitter pangs, which follow the loss of an adored companion! But may you also, whatever shall happen, trust always to the goodness of God, and depend implicitly upon his justice. I embrace you.

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#### IV.

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#### CHARLES TO LOUISE.

MADemoiselle,

*Geneva.*

I have received a letter from M. Prevere which I enclose in this. From its contents I trusted that I should not be guilty of any breach of confidence in handing it to you. For my own part, after having read it, I find myself incapable of writing to you. So deeply has it filled me with gratitude and love towards him, towards you, and towards your father, that I know not which way



to turn, and whatever I would say I find already said, and in the only way in which it can be said. Suffer me then, Louise, to answer you this one time, as you have done, through M. Prevere's lips, and to allow him to express to you, far better than I could do myself, that which will be eternally engraven on my heart.

"Moderate my transports!" I will endeavour to do so, since it is M. Prevere who requests it. I believe that it is prudent, but have I the power? It is in vain that I make the greatest efforts; these only arouse new transports, in leading me to think of you, Louise. In reading what he has said, I was almost beside myself with joy. Oh! how he knows, how he feels, how he comprehends everything! It is only by degrees that I discover his benevolent views. Every day I fancy that I esteem and love him with all my strength, but I soon discover that my love and respect are far in arrear of his goodness. Therefore I have not written to him these last few days; for how can I express what I feel towards him?

One thing, however, in his letter has inspired me with dread. This is where he speaks of that peaceful happiness towards which you were advancing by so sure a path. This is so true!—and, according to what he says farther on, happiness is so fragile! Accustomed as I have been to look to you for all my felicity, I never imagined that I could add to yours; but the idea that I might perhaps deprive you of it, has made me shudder. M. Prevere's words have a solemnity which causes me the deepest anxiety. Ah! it is true, Louise, that I have need of courage—of a courage which I must derive from you. Let your words direct and enlighten me; let me draw from them, not indeed strength, which I feel I have in abundance for labour or for action, but confidence to reassure me against the fear that I may perhaps compromise your future destiny!

We have sometimes spoken of the sorrows of M. Prevere, but lightly, and only as children speak. I at least have done so, and now I reproach myself for it. The conclusion of his letter has affected me deeply, in revealing to me a daily weight of sorrow with which I never dreamed

he was oppressed; for he never speaks of it, and seems engrossed solely with the sorrows of others. Oh! how singular is the position in which I find myself placed! I have scarcely been absent for a fortnight, and yet everything is changed, and you all seem as it were different beings. A thousand things, in the midst of which I lived for so many years without perceiving them, are apparent to me now, and there is not one of them—no, not one—which does not add an infinite value to the beings whom I love. Their superiority does not humiliate me, because they are my friends and my guides, but it makes me sorrowful; for I am so far beneath them, so little worthy of the benefits which they heap upon me, and so little certain that I shall ever become so. Ah! Louise, I remember with gratitude, but not without bitterness, that my sole title to your compassion is doubtless the misfortune of my birth, is my solitary and destitute position. You draw nigh to him whom others would reject; you are unwilling that I should remain alone in the world, and it is to my misfortunes that I am indebted for all those blessings which I would owe to affection and esteem, the result of my own deserts. Thus in the midst of happiness I feel sorrowful, and your silence serves to complete my dejection. I beseech you write to me.

Your obedient and affectionate

CHARLES.

## V.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

• MONSIEUR CHARLES,

*The Parsonage.*

Your letters penetrate my heart, but they throw me into a state of extreme agitation. It may happen, as has lately been the case, that I may sometimes be too slow in writing to you; I beg of you to excuse this, and to believe that it does not arise from indifference. Mr. Prevère and my father charge me with their most friendly remembrances, to which I beg to add my own.

LOUISE.

P.S.—I return M. Prevere's letter to you. I read a few lines of it, but I preferred not to proceed any farther. Do me the favour not to be angry with me.

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## VI.

## THE PRECENTOR\* TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE been speaking about you to M. Prevere, on the subject of the profession which you are to follow. He says you are free to choose; as for me, I say the same, provided that you choose soon, in which M. Prevere agrees too. You will soon be a tall young man, and that is the time for bestirring one's self.

It was yesterday evening that we were chatting on the bench after supper. Louise was there, but she went away when she saw on what it turned, for of late she is timid and trembles at a mere nothing; save that she is well enough in other respects. When it was ten o'clock we separated; but, in returning under the shade of the lime-trees, we saw a light in her chamber, although, to confess the truth, I thought she was abed. I went up stairs, leaving M. Prevere to return to his own house. She had in her hand your letters, which had thus moved her.—“Good news, my dear?” said I.—“Yes, father,” she replied, “but which make me uneasy, this language, is so new to me;” and she wept, holding out your letter to me. I would not take it. “This is between you two, my child; I have no business with it. But I will tell you what,” added I—“we have been trying to find a profession for him.” I then perceived that she had been thinking about the same thing; for she took my hand as though she had something to say, only the words had

\* As the reader may have perceived from the precentor's letter at the close of the first book, the language of this personage is peculiar; it is because he uses the idiom of the old villagers of the retired cantons of Romand Switzerland, where they retain a French which is older than that of the towns, and sometimes more highly coloured.

difficulty to come. "I would like," said she to me at last, "to write to him on that subject, but I have not yet been able to venture. Whereupon the poor girl, bursting into tears, threw her arms round my neck, saying, "Dear father, I will never leave you."

After a good while she recovered herself; she was calm; and not to disturb her again, I talked to her about other matters, amongst others the christening, which, as you know, they are going to have at the Legrands—it is their fifth. And, on considering the matter, I said to myself that I would write to you about it.

I know her idea quite well: it is that you ~~should~~ become a minister, in order that you might practise your profession here, or at any rate without separating her from me. It is for you to see about this matter, in which I have no right to interfere. I have had my day; it is not for the old to constrain the young. So you will choose what shall seem profitable for you and for her, without taking any concern about me. If you incline to business, which would require close attention and oblige you to travel, I will not be any hinderance; I will do as well as I can without you. If you prefer something else, well and good, provided that it affords a sure and sufficient subsistence.

This is what I wished to say before Louise writes to you, as I did not like to contradict her at the time, knowing I should have given her pain. While on this subject, there is another thing I wish to speak to you about, which she never would listen to, that is to say, the property coming to her in right of her mother, of which I owe you an account, as how I have increased it by a third, and cleared it from all mortgage; for at her death, there were owing six hundred florins on the piece of land, for which I hold a receipt in due form. It is the field in the bottom, below the pond, so that it always has water, however dry the weather may be, as it was five years ago, when, though all around it was burned up, five loads of hay and aftergrass were carried from it. The whole forms the prettiest meadow in the parish, witness Louis Réard, who says that he will give all his land for it and



his cow to boot. My opinion is, that this close ought never to be sold or burdened by borrowing upon it. After all it is a bit of bread, if one had lost everything else; and, by hard work, a family might manage to live upon it, as my poor wife used to say. This, Charles, I repeat to you, that you may know about it, if it is true that you wish to do me pleasure. In this case I shall be easy as long as I live and afterwards too.

The rest is in linen and household furniture, especially two silver table-spoons with her mark, half-a-dozen tea-spoons, and the gold chain with the medallion which I gave her on her wedding-day. Out of the produce of the close, I have replaced the linen by degrees, and new-stuffed all the chairs two years ago come Martinmas. If it please God, when the time comes, you shall not find that I have been remiss in regard to my daughter's property, and in carrying out the intentions of my dear and honoured wife, as she told me them before God took her to himself; and as I wish that out of respect for her, and love to me, you will continue to follow them.

As for what I am able to leave you, it is but trifling, supporting myself by my situation, and having brought up a child. The overplus you will have some day, and it will be time enough then to see how much it is, after putting aside some savings every year. So you see it is necessary to be active, and to trust more to yourself than to all the rest. Be prudent, therefore, and industrious; beware of turning fine gentleman; these folks spend a great deal without it doing them any good; the first gain is not to spend. I would wish you to live content, just as you were here, neither more nor less; one always launches out soon enough when the money is come. Before that, one must be shy, and shut up the purse in proportion as it fills. But this without any reproach to the psalm-book which you have sent me, although the silver clasps were rather too much. It is not a present that ruins; take care of the pence, the pounds will take care of themselves; spend a crown, but save your sous.

There is to be a dancing at Legrand's. I have lent my barn. M. Prevere will be present. This Legrand



says that it cannot go on without you. I tell them that it will go on just as well, and that they must leave you to mind your business.

## VII.

MONSIEUR DERVEY TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

MY DEAR SIR,

Geneva.

Here is your young *protégé* installed in his new abode, and fairly entered on his studies. He is an amiable young man, and appears to me to have profited much by your instructions. I have had the interview with him which you requested, and the result is that he is desirous of embracing the same career as yourself. He can imagine nothing more worthy, nothing more desirable, than to imitate you, whether present or absent; and I confess to you, my dear brother, that this determination has impressed me with the most favourable opinion both of his heart and of his judgment.

I fancied I could discover some additional motives for his determination, although he assured me that it has not been recently formed, and that a conversation which he had held with you during one of your walks had confirmed him in it. These motives are, that any other profession would afford him less hope of living near you, and near Mademoiselle Louise's father, from whom it is probable she would not part without extreme repugnance. All this appears to me both wise and well-considered, and I am happy to see that so serious an undertaking, formed at an age so inexperienced, is not only strengthened by favourable circumstances, but also by the peculiar situation of these amiable young people. However we shall speak of all this more fully, I hope, before many days have passed.

P.S.—Of course I shall keep secret, even from my own family, all that you have confided to me; and I fully agree with you as to the propriety of not publishing the engagement which henceforth exists between Charles and Mademoiselle Louise.

## VIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

I BEG of you to forgive me, Mademoiselle Louise, for the indiscretion which I have committed, and which your note has made me deeply sensible of. I shall endeavour in future to avoid any repetition of it; but the novelty of the situation in which I found myself, may perhaps offer some apology for my fault, and induce you to be indulgent towards my rather unmeasured language. Having never before corresponded with any person, and now commencing in the midst of feelings so deeply agitating, I know not what I ought to say or what I ought to refrain from saying, and in the warmth of my emotion I have too easily forgotten myself.

I wish to tell you of a determination which I have formed, if you should view it favourably. The other day M. Devey sent for me, and requested me in so kind a manner to let him know my ideas respecting the choice of a profession, that I expressed to him my long-formed desire of embracing the same which M. Prevere fills. He approved of my choice, at which I felt delighted; for, in addition to my own preference for it, I had other motives which I could not explain to him.

Do you remember, Louise, the day of our excursion to the châlets? You ought to remember it, for since that time we have never been the same. When we reached the hills of Chevron, from which we could command a view of the parsonage, we seated ourselves upon the grassy slope. "Charles," you said to me—for then we conversed without restraint and expressed all that we felt—"Charles, is not this country sweet and peaceful? Would you not wish to spend your life here?" "Yes!" I answered, "if you passed yours here also." "Never!" you replied—"never shall I leave my father nor M. Prevere!"

These words, Louise, I have never forgotten. I recalled them to mind the moment I was led to anticipate the happiness of associating my life with yours. They were

present to my heart whilst M. Dervey spoke to me, and it appeared to me almost like a dream to see them assume this enchanting reality. I dream without ceasing of those happy days spent in that *sweet* and *peaceful* country, as you called it in your own dear and gentle voice—I dream of a thousand pleasures shared together—of a thousand attentions paid in common to your father and M. Prevere—I dream of one who would adorn all by her presence—but see, I am forgetting myself again. Oh! how often I dream that I have words to express all that I feel for you, and that you are listening to all the outpourings of my heart! But it is only a dream.

M. Dervey has truly told me that the future does not depend upon ourselves, that clergymen are not always placed in the neighbourhoods they desire. But he added that means may perhaps be found of arranging the matter as we wish; that I can at least always assist M. Prevere in the discharge of his duties; that his parish, being the most retired and the poorest in the canton, is little coveted by others; and that M. Prevere himself took it only because no other candidate presented himself. I listened to M. Dervey with all my soul, for that which would alarm me the most, would be to contend with rivals. Here, at M. Dervey's, I have met with several young ministers who are waiting to be placed. They are all fine gentlemen, dressed according to the fashion: they are as much at their ease in a drawing-room as I should be in a meadow; they converse with ease, and say all sorts of amusing things to the ladies. It is certain that if one of these were to ask for the parish, I should not get it. But what would they do in that village? They will not have it, and the parish will be left to me—to the peasant!

My studies would interest me much, if they did not prevent my thoughts from dwelling on you. M. Dervey is not displeased with the little I have acquired at the parsonage, but I see that here one learns after a different fashion; it is to enable the student to go through his examinations, and to enter the classes of philosophy and jurisprudence, but not to enjoy what he learns. So

many chapters thoroughly known, so many books carefully studied, so many problems well demonstrated, and a step in the ladder is mounted; that is the way they reckon. It is a much less amusing mode of study, but I must follow it. I am convinced, too, that it is quite necessary that it should be so, otherwise there are things that would never be learned, since they are amusing neither in one way nor another: the problems in algebra, for instance, where the result is known beforehand; and still more, those pages of Greek which are also problems to be solved, often more difficult and more tiresome than the former.

What delight I take in talking thus to you—in telling you everything! Yet, if I should weary you, what would become of me? At every new object which I see I ask myself, ‘What would Louise say?—should we think alike about it?’ No idea, no object pleases me if you do not share it, and if I cannot say ‘We shall converse together about it, or if that cannot be, I shall write.’ And after all this, I speak to you of algebra! Is not that forgetting with a vengeance?

One moment more, I beseech you. How I should love to know what you are doing whilst I write to you! All the day long I follow you in thought; but I fear that I am often mistaken—that I go to the left when you are on the right—to the Acacias when you are in your chamber. When I think of this, these mistakes vex and grieve me, and I stop abruptly, only to commence again without any certainty of doing better. Only listen, if you do not believe me.

Yesterday afternoon there was a storm. The clouds chased each other rapidly across the sky, and the swallows skimmed along the earth; then came that loud clap of thunder, and afterwards the rain. From the commencement I had placed myself at my window; and, as the raging of the tempest increased, all that was then passing at the parsonage rose before me with the most vivid reality. I saw Antoine, on the road leading from the Woods, having left the meadows, and allowing his frightened cattle to fly before him; Dourak barking at the clouds; the linden trees rocking to their loudest



branches, and the villagers seeking shelter under the projecting roofs of their cottages. I saw M. Prevere at his casement, pensive, and his eyes fixed on the distant landscape; and your father bringing in the chairs and closing the shutters of the parsonage.

But while I was gazing at these things, there was another object which I had held in reserve, waiting until the tumult should have subsided to devote myself to it without hinderance. When the shutters of the parsonage were closed, when your father had seated himself under the porch, and all was tranquil around, then it was that my imagination immediately took flight into the neighbouring fields, there to meet that object which I had set apart. For fear that you should not guess whom I mean, I must explain myself more fully.

It was a young girl, whom the storm had surprised whilst seated upon the bench beneath the walnut-trees. At this instant she was passing along the margin of the pond, where her image was reflected in the agitated waters. Some drops of rain made her quicken her pace until she gained the shelter of the linden-trees, where she paused to fasten up her hair which had been loosened by the wind. Chased from thence by the rain, I saw her afterwards retire into her chamber, and leaning her elbow upon the window-sill, gaze like myself at the careering clouds, sink by degrees into reverie, lulled by the monotonous splash of the rain, and think—think of what? Here uncertainty and desire made my heart beat.

I endeavoured in every possible way to draw these meditations towards myself; but it was more natural to suppose that her attention was attracted by what was passing before her eyes—by some bird taking shelter amongst the branches of the trees—by the cows returning from the pastures—by a passenger on the high-road. I imagined myself this passenger; it was already claiming for myself her attention. But my enjoyment was only half complete, for I was not recognised; and moreover, having reached a turning in the road, I was soon lost to her view. At last, lured on by my wishes, I ventured to instil myself in her thoughts, to believe myself the



subject of her reverie, to assume to myself the sweetness of that look; the softness of that smile; and I was translating the secret emotions of her heart into a language which transported me with delight, when Antoine entered. "Well! so you are not at the Parsonage?" "I am come to buy corn." "And Dourak?" "I shut him up in the stable for fear of a racket." "And—and—Louise?" "They all went to Allemogne this morning."

Antoine is gone. I have closed my window, and seated myself to study algebra. What better could I do?

## IX.

## LOUISE TO CHARLES.

MONSIEUR CHARLES,

*The Parsonage.*

I am deeply touched by the determination to which you have come. Although I am afraid of the too tender things which you say to me, and which I know not how to reply to, yet I assure you I feel very, very, happy in thinking that your plans are in accordance with my own wishes, and that I can only attribute this to sentiments which touch me infinitely. But I prefer to imagine, to guess them, far more than to listen to the too animated expression of them. In the former way they penetrate my heart, whilst in the latter they agitate me.

Never imagine that you forget yourself in speaking to me of your studies, nor of anything which either strikes or interests you. I may often be unable to understand you because these subjects are out of my province, but they will not interest me the less, both perhaps because I am naturally inquisitive, and because it is you who speak.

Formerly we used to chat about everything at random, and this gossip was always dear to me; I hope that we shall not forget this happy custom. Besides it will supply you with matter for letters every day, and will also leave me something to ask you, and something to answer you in return.

Shall I confess to you, Charles, a weakness for which

I reproach myself, and which arises from one of those caprices which I fear you must think so strange? I know not how to be happy. Surrounded by those who love me, without a wish unsatisfied, without a care to conceal, I nevertheless experience intervals of melancholy in which all seems a blank, without my being able to tell the cause. I feel as if I regretted the peaceful calm of our early years, which nevertheless nothing has occurred to disturb, and which ought still to exist as formerly. I long to have the power of retaining the present, and keeping it with us for ever. All that is connected with the future, everything which leads me to look forward to change, a change which I nevertheless know to be inevitable, inspires me with dread, and gives rise to involuntary regrets. This is why the too animated expression of your feelings distresses me. You laugh at yourself for speaking to me about Algebra? In truth, it is the very passage in your letter which put me most at ease. It reminded me of what you were formerly, when we chatted together about everything which occurred to our minds, and when you had not changed your language; so that, as formerly, I listened to you satisfied and happy. Continue ever thus. Pray speak to me of everything that happens to you, of all that you do, of the people with whom you become acquainted. By so doing you will give peace and delight to my heart, and a sort of reflection of former times, which at once encourages and pleases me. You are not now to learn for the first time that the extreme goodness of every one around me has made me fanciful and exacting.

I shall not venture to guess who that young person may be of whom you speak. Here there are only village girls, to whom the refined graces which you have lent her would be entirely unsuitable, and whose reveries at their windows must necessarily be too humble and of too little value to inspire so much pleasure. It is much more likely that yours should flatter her who might think herself the object of them.

However, you were not the only one who enjoyed the magnificent spectacle of the storm. The morning before yesterday we set out for Allemogne. Our intention was

to dine near the Springs; but finding the place already occupied by another party, we set out in search of another dining apartment higher up the mountain. After having climbed a long time without deciding, always endeavouring to find a still more delightful shade, we reached the last of the chestnut-trees, where we placed our basket of provisions on the ground, under a thick canopy of foliage. "Oh, what a beautiful spot!" exclaimed M. Prevere; "here we have everything we could wish for—except Charles," added he, in order to enter into the feelings of every one present.

It was here that we partook of our little repast. We were four in number; for a young kid, whose mother was browsing at some distance off, came to keep us company, and eat along with us, delighting us with its capricious gaiety and the agile grace of all its movements. Have you remarked with what kindness M. Prevere welcomes dumb animals, and encourages their approach; how he loves to gather them around him, and prizes their confidence? The simple and confiding security of this little creature gave him visible pleasure, and it was delightful to see this grave and serious man putting a constraint on his gestures that he might not alarm his trusting guest. After dinner I read aloud to him while my father reposed near us on the grass. It was while we were thus occupied that clouds began to gather over the heavens, and a pale dim light, gradually taking the place of the radiance of the sun, caused the shadows thrown by the leafy branches to disappear. We were gazing at the approaching storm, which did not seem as if it would reach us, when, at a violent peal of thunder, the flock of goats darted down the mountain's side with hasty bounds, my father awoke from his sleep with a sudden start, and, the rain commencing to fall with violence, we hastened to seek a shelter beneath the lofty rocks against which the chestnut-trees seem to lean for support. Then, how we enjoyed the scene! We were underneath the shelter of the projecting cliff, in a sort of cave picturesquely carpeted with wild plants, and at our side was the little kid, which, not being able to find its mother again, had followed us, bleating. But around this tranquil asylum



all was boisterous and agitated; the trees rocked as if the wind would tear them up by the roots; at the foot of the mountain long lines of whirling dust enabled us to distinguish the roads which led to the hamlets; and, farther off in the level country, until the gaze was arrested by the mountains which bounded the horizon, a gloomy and sombre tint seemed to have transformed that lovely landscape into a desolate solitude. In a few places only, the sun, piercing through the clouds, gilded with its brightest rays some smiling tracts, which thus appeared to form enchanted isles in the midst of a dreary ocean.

We were all silent. M. Prevère contemplated the scene in a sort of pleasing reverie; and his eyes, animated by some inward emotion, shone with a soft and gentle radiance. For my own part, I experienced a confused feeling of joy, a sort of delicious agitation mingled with solemn expectation. You remember how, at the approach of a storm, we used to seek out some shelter, from which we loved to listen together to the thunder, even though we trembled at every peal? It was that feeling which I now experienced, but far more deep, more vivid, more intense, and with it was mingled an agitation of heart which was unknown to me then. A thousand recollections crowded upon my mind, a thousand thoughts flashed across me, and all these feelings became embellished with an indescribable charm, at once religious and touching. Shall I tell you that my thoughts were not of you at that moment? No, Charles, your image, which never leaves me, was present with me then more vividly than ever, and unceasingly rose before me, amidst the conflict of my vague and troubled thoughts.

Insensibly the wind swept away the clouds, and the setting sun poured a flood of light over the refreshed and invigorated plains. All nature seemed born anew, embellished with all the charms of life and youth. My conflicting emotions were succeeded by a sort of tranquil and confiding hope. I fixed my swimming eyes on the parsonage, which was visible in the distance. That tranquil retreat appeared to me then still more tranquil; it seemed to open its arms to receive and shelter me,



I hastened to take refuge in its peaceful walls, and you followed me! \* \* \* \* \*

You have narrated your reverie to me, Charles; I have now related mine, and, as I see, at sufficient length. M. Prevere rose, saying, "We did well to make choice of this day for our excursion!" and we quietly retraced our steps to the parsonage, where I found your letter on my arrival.

## X.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

It is impossible for me to refrain from telling you, Louise, how your letter transported me with joy, how unceasingly I read it, and how unable I am to think of anything else! Surely you cannot exact that such things as these should be read, and then be calmly laid aside and spoken of no more! For my own part, I should think myself unworthy to read them if I were able to keep silent about them.

But it is you who say tender things to me!—so tender that I dare hardly believe them. For the more I read them the more it seems to me as if you said in so many words: "Charles, you are dear to me, I think of you, I like you to converse with me." And what could you say better calculated to render me unutterably happy?

You wish me then to mention to you everything that happens to me, all that I see, all that strikes my attention? I should wish to obey you; but lo! ever since you have expressed the desire, nothing has arisen; I have seen nothing; I have been interested in nothing. And yet it is not that I want the wish to see, or to be interested. And then how do you imagine that anything can happen to me? Seven hours each day I spend in poring over books; the rest of my time I am thinking of you. Such are my daily adventures. No excursions to Allemogne, no dinners beneath the chestnut-trees, no pretty kids, and above all, no sweet and penetrating language, which you

know so well how to employ to express your thoughts, of which it is so charming an image!

It is not however that, accustomed as I have been to the tranquil and retired life of the parsonage, the spectacle of this city is not interesting and curious from its novelty; but my mind is, as it were, bewildered by it. I am incapable of forming any opinion upon the various objects which pass before my eyes, and I flit from one to another without taking any general view of them, or finding any connection between them. Nevertheless, in the midst of this confusion, I feel myself changed almost unconsciously. Certain things excite my interest, others my disgust; the persons whom I hear speak either please or displease me; and thus sentiments of dislike or regard insensibly arise within me, without my being able to assign any cause for these impressions—unless, perhaps, that I think of the judgments we would form together concerning them. This bewildering confusion of ideas is still further augmented or kept up by the shame which I feel at my own ignorance, and by the timidity which is its natural result. I dare not ask questions for fear of appearing too great a novice; and when I hear interesting subjects discussed before me, I scarcely venture to listen with attention, in the dread that they should make me a party in the conversation, and treat me as a fine gentleman, in which case I verily believe I should faint away. I think this must arise from a country life, which renders young men uncultivated and awkward, for I meet here with many younger than myself who understand every subject which is discussed, and who question and reply with a confidence which I admire. I have even been pointed out one who writes in the journals. To say the truth I rather think that if the task were to climb to the highest branch of a cherry-tree, or to pluck a flower for you from the face of a lofty rock, I should have the advantage over them; but who attaches any value to such accomplishments here?

I have, however, made one acquaintance, and in rather an amusing way. The other day I was watering my garden (it consists of a slip from your rose-tree which I made Ap/oine bring me). The water, filtering through the earth,

happened to fall, all muddy and discoloured as it was, upon the snow-white cap of the porter of the house, who was standing exactly under my window, amusing himself, according to his usual custom, with looking at the passers-by. He immediately fell into a great passion, and began to apostrophize me, but without seeing me; for the moment after I committed the crime I had retreated to the farthest extremity of my apartment.

M. Dervey's attention being aroused by the great disturbance which the porter made, he approached his window also, to judge with his own eyes of the extent of the mischief, and thereupon I overheard from the place of my concealment the following dialogue:—"Come, Monsieur Champin, it is only a slight mishap." "Ask pardon, Monsieur le Pasteur, but my cap is quite wet through!" "Very well, but even so, it is not an irreparable misfortune." "Ask pardon, Monsieur le Pasteur, but I could excuse the compliment." "Without doubt, but then it was purely accidental." "Ask pardon, Monsieur le Pasteur, but he has hid himself." "Ah! you are deafening with your complaints!" and M. Dervey shut his window abruptly, while the poor porter continued in an under voice:—

"I am sure if any one had drenched M. le Pasteur's own wig in this way, even if it had been with clean water, he would have talked in quite another fashion. What has a man a tongue for if it is not to complain?—When *he* is preaching nobody disturbs him, let him speak ever so loud; and besides I have no more white ones left." Then raising his voice, "Hark ye! people know where the Auditor is to be found, and it is easy enough to carry a complaint to him, good-for-nothing student!—Schoolboys' tricks, indeed! In my time, young people were quiet and well-behaved, above all, to their elders—and then I should like to have seen one of them touch my cap!"

I had been discontented with myself from the first moment, not for having soiled his cap, but for having hid myself; and I felt anxious to confess what I had done as quickly as possible. At the same time, fearing to attract M. Dervey's attention afresh if I should show myself at this moment and provoke a noisy explanation, I

had recourse to a plan which I trusted might restore me to favour without noise or disturbance. Knowing then that M. Champin repairs all the watches in the house, and supplies both keys and glasses to all the inmates, I folded up my watch in a sheet of paper, which contained my apologies, expressed as nearly as possible in the following terms:—

“I entreat you, Monsieur Champin, to excuse me, and to believe that, although I was foolish enough to conceal myself, it was perfectly unintentionally that I soiled your cap. At the same time I shall be much obliged if you will put my watch (which I here enclose) in order, and furnish it with a glass and a key.”

After which I suspended the little parcel by a string, which I gently lowered down the wall; and all was succeeding admirably, when the unlucky package became entangled in the bars of the cage in which M. Champin keeps his well-beloved canaries. I saw at a glance all the horrors of my situation, and the impossibility of warding off a frightful explosion of rage if I were perceived. With the utmost patience, and with infinite precautions, I softly shook the string in order to disengage it; but, after a thousand efforts, I only succeeded in shaking the cage. At the same moment a hand seized upon the packet, and the storm burst forth! Happily, M. Dervev had just retired from his chamber.

I allowed the first violence of the tempest to pass over in silence. All that I could do was to take advantage of the few rare pauses in the monologue which he thundered against me, to say—“Open it—open it! Monsieur Champin;” and as the violence of his gestures alarmed me—“Take care!” added I, “it is a watch.” These words took effect; and calm being again established, some passers-by, who had begun to gather in a crowd before the house, dispersed, to my great satisfaction.

I waited for a full minute, and then, leaning out of the window as far as I could, I perceived my note laid upon the bench, and could distinguish, immediately under the spectacles of the porter, his hands busily engaged in examining the watch. “I know this article,” said he, at last.



“Possibly,” replied I. “It belonged to one of my friends.”  
 “And it was given to me by one of mine.” “Do you know Reybaz, the precentor?” “Do I know him! I was brought up in his house.” From that moment we were linked together by the bonds of affection, and forthwith had a long chat together. At last some one called him. “I will put you in a beautiful glass,” said he, as he was moving off. “You understand, that, looking at your age, and seeing you read so many books, I took you for one of the students. Besides, you hid yourself, and I was no conjurer to guess who you were. However, let us speak no more about it. Good-bye for the present.”

And thus I have made a friend, and a friend who knows your father. For me it is certainly quite an event. I have only to put my head out of the window and I am sure to find him at his; and our colloquies are held in the open air, and with the whole street as spectators. He is a most amusing man. He is always talking of bygone times; and from his porter’s lodge he judges and disapproves of all the changes or alterations which have taken place either in persons, things, or dwellings, from a recent date. He calls your father an *ancient*; that is to say, a worthy of the good old times. He says that my watch is one also, and he endeavours to put me on my guard against the flat watches of modern manufacture. I have gained his esteem by telling him that I shall never have any other than this, which I have received from your father; for he places it to the account of my love for *vertical movements* and my hatred to *horizontal escapements*. These are technical terms which I have retained, as personifying in his eyes the ancient and the modern system of watch-making.

To conclude, do you know what he told me? “I knew her when she was a very little thing; but, faith, that is seven years ago! She was gentle as a lamb then; and moreover promised to be everything in time. With age she must have improved; and then her father is an *ancient*! Make my respects to him. He will probably remember Champin—Champin, Jean-Marc—Champin of the Rue Jean-Jacques—Champin the watch-maker

—Champin the wedding friend, the cavalier of the ladies, once on a time. Better still, Champin, quite short. He cannot mistake. All right. He is an ancient!”

In bidding you farewell, may I request you to present my best regards to all. Your affectionate  
CHARLES.

## XI. .

### THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

#### *The Parsonage*

SINCE Roset died, the parish has been without a mole-catcher; by reason of which the moles breed in security, and the meadows are melancholy to see, being all heights and hollows. Foron has tried his hands, but for moles, you need to have all your wits about you, more by token that I have myself been looking after one for a week past, without being any nearer the mark than at the beginning. 'Tis a great pity that Roset is dead; and that too, without having brought up any one to the business.

You must go to Mollesulaz. They have one there who is said to be as cunning as a fox; tell him to come for a month: the parish will pay him his wages, and two sous over and above for every mole he catches. That is a sous more than they gave Roset, and, besides, there are six times as many as in his time.

It is feared that there will be a bad season for the vines. That storm, the other day, has cut up the grapes towards Chevron, which makes me glad that I have finished layering. With the vine one never has any rest. We are too near the mountains; if there is not hail, there is the Bise.\* For one comet, there are ten cold seasons.

Poor Brachoz is in a very bad state—you have heard the story. Last Friday, having sold his heifer, he returned late from market, bringing with him a new pickaxe. Next day he was found at the foot of the *moraine*† of the Bois, as stiff as a corpse. They gave him something to drink, and by little and little he came

\* The north-east wind.

† A ledge of stones and gravel which border the glaciers in Switzerland.

to himself, until at last he opened his eyes and asked for his pickaxe. They then carried him to his house on a hand-barrow of branches. The pickaxe was there before him; it had been picked up on the road by Louise's orphan. Some say that he had taken a glass too much; others, that it was the dark night. The veterinary thinks it a bad case, and that the chest is injured. In the village they say that one of the ribs is crossed over another in such a way that the undermost is making havoc with the inside. To tell the truth, we shall know nothing about it till this evening, when a physician from the city, sent for by M. Prevere, will be here. Meanwhile they are sowing his ground for him, and the Legrands have put off the dance, being his cousins once removed. The little one is constantly with his wife, who is in great trouble, looking on her husband as already dead.

During that hail storm on Wednesday, we were at Allemogne to dine. It was an unlucky day: we had barely time to take shelter under the rocks, so that we were very uncomfortable; and then on our return, nothing but wind. The wind was so high that it carried away two loft doors from the stable, and blew down two walnut-trees—they were young ones. They say that the lightning from that loud clap of thunder, fell on the other side of the Rhone, on the steeple of Bernex, and killed the bell-ringer, who was ringing for vespers. Enquire about this. I should not be surprised at it, with that everlasting ringing of bells which they keep up in their religion. At Allemogne they ring just the same. The almanack says that it attracts the lightning. But they cannot read for want of Lancasterian schools, by reason of the *curés* who will not suffer any.

But to return to business—try to go there to-morrow. It will be a walk for you. It is below the bridge, with a mole on the sign-board, and panes of paper in the window. His name I do not know, but you will easily find him. Our friendly remembrances, REYBAZ.

P.S. Is it true that Russia is stirring, and that there is news? War now would do a deal of mischief.

## XII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

I MUST make a trial of a new messenger, Louise. I am going to place this letter under Dourak's collar, and to leave to him the task of making you comprehend his mission. However, as it is possible that he might offer it to others, I must refrain from writing any secrets.

Dourak was here at daybreak; for, the moment the house was opened, he made his way into it, and I was awakened by the sound of his paws scratching at my door. The most amusing part of it was that the porter was following him with a long broom to drive him away; but scarcely had he raised his weapon, when friend Dourak displayed a pair of glistening tusks, accompanied with a firm and sustained growl. Whereupon the warlike porter made an honourable retreat, keeping his face to the foe, and I opened the door.

I waited, expecting to see him followed immediately by Antoine; but as the latter did not make his appearance, I was obliged to conclude that this was a spontaneous visit from my old friend. It appeared to me, therefore, that I owed him so much the more gratitude and attention, and, putting aside my papers and books, I sallied out with him to show him the town.

But in all the town Dourak had eyes for nothing but myself. He leaped and gambolled round me, and could scarcely restrain his joy within reasonable limits. At last we met a dainty little poodle, trimmed, combed, curled, and led by an old lady in a string. At the sight of this object Dourak became serious in a moment. He hesitated to recognise his fellow-creature, and was preparing to make a leap upon the insect, when the lady, anticipating with alarm the destruction of her pet, entreated my interference. Whereupon I, of course, played a very magnanimous part.

Further on I had to play another part not quite so distinguished. Whilst pursuing my way with my friend, I remarked, with some anxiety, that the fineness of his



olfactory organs made him sensible of certain rich and odorous currents in the atmosphere. One of these currents unfortunately led him to a butcher's stall, where, raising himself upon his hind legs, he seized, without ceremony, upon a *galantine*\* with truffles. In a moment the whole shop, the whole street, was in an uproar, one seizing a yardstick, another a switch, and on all sides the cry arose, "To whom does the dog belong?" This was the moment for me to declare myself, to show that I was not ashamed of my friend, and to pay for his repast. I dared not, or rather I would not, do this. The sticks were still flourishing in the air, and the remembrance of certain analogous situations, in which silence had been singularly useful to me, kept my lips closed. I therefore returned a short time afterwards and paid for his forced-meat. It was very dear. Dourak alone knows whether it was good. He was waiting for me at some distance off, with the most self-satisfied air in the world.

We have returned from our ramble, and it is while he is taking his siesta that I pen these lines, which, if you allow me, I shall not reckon as a letter. But here is Dourak showing symptoms of wishing to depart. I must therefore make an end of my gossip, to take advantage of a decision which I scarcely know how I should have ventured to hint to him, if he had not formed it of his own accord. I tremble for the result; for if he should be arrested for a second attempt upon a galantine, how this paper might compromise him!

### XIII.

• LOUISE TO CHARLES. *The Parsonage.*

I HAVE executed your commission to my father, Charles. 'Champin, quite short,' was sufficient; and the remembrance of this early friend at first rejoiced him greatly. He repeated, in the same words—"He is an ancient! Cham-

\* A ball of forced-meat.

pin, Jean-Marc; Champin, the watch-mender, the cavalier of the ladies when we were young together." And then I could perceive plainly that these pleasurable recollections became mingled with thoughts of my mother. "Dear and honoured wife!" he added, "it was he who made the proposal for me." And he was serious during all the rest of the day.

Fortunately towards evening your mole-catcher arrived, and gave a new direction to his thoughts. My father immediately accompanied him into the fields, where they prepared their plans of operation together. But what a droll man you have sent us!—with his red hair, his white eyelashes, and his yellow eyes, he looks like a sorcerer, and I should feel afraid to meet him in the fields alone. It is rumoured through the hamlet that he tells fortunes; so that he will have sufficient occupation on hand, although it must be unknown to M. Prevere, from whom the villagers carefully conceal these superstitions. I hear these secrets through my father, from whom they are less anxious to conceal them, although he does not believe in them any more than M. Prevere.

He said to me, however—"Do you know, Louise, this mole-catcher is a knowing fellow. He can scent out their track under the earth; and by only looking where the grass droops, he can tell you the exact place where the mole is burrowing. The rascal hints that he works by witchcraft, but, for my part, I say it is instinct. It requires instinct for moles; without that, the most cunning is taken in. You dig here—the mole is yonder. But this is really a clever fellow. They wanted to consult him about Brachoz, but I advised them not." My poor father! I am angry with myself for even appearing to smile at his language; but it is because it paints him so correctly that I love to repeat it.

I am not surprised that your town life should puzzle and bewilder you as you say. So many new objects! So widely different an existence! For my own part, when I read in your letters the effect that this spectacle produces upon you, I follow your example; and just as if this noise and confusion could reach me, I cling more

closely to my own obscure and silent retreat, and I promise myself never, never, to leave it. But on this very account I listen with the more pleasure to your recitals: they are like the echoes of some distant tumult which the wind wafts towards the peaceful bank on which I am seated.

Do not allow yourself to change too much, unconsciously. My father fears that you will become too much of the true gentleman, and I also. It seems to me that your studies, the sort of life which you are leading, the class of people among whom you live, the connexions which you are forming, must all tend to produce this effect. *propos*, you have told me nothing yet of M. Dervey's society, nothing of the young ladies you have met with, nothing of those drawing-rooms in which you listen to the conversation of the day, nothing of that city which is my home, although I am in total ignorance concerning it. How many objects of interest are open to you! As for me, to talk to you of moles, it is the great event with us, and will be so for a long time, while you do not say a word of the capital where you ought at least to have an anecdote occurring every day.

LOUISE.

LOUISE.—Martha has this moment handed me your letter, telling me that your messenger addressed himself to her. The paper, having become loosened in the journey, projected beyond the edge of the collar; if it had not done so, it might have remained there, and finally have fallen into other hands. Even while thanking you, I must confess, nevertheless, that I should in this case have felt rather embarrassed.

#### XIV.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

—Geneva.

It is certain, that I change, Louise, and very greatly: were it only in loving you more and more every day. And then, were I not to change, how could I ever become worthy of you? There are moments when I wish to be

the highest on this earth, only that I might lay all my power and my glory at your feet! It is on this side that ambition attacks me, and I covet distinctions, not for their own sake, but that I might sacrifice them all for you. When I meet in this city men who are held in the highest respect, who are superior to all around them, and who are considered as an honour to their country, I sigh for their advantages, as for gifts from Heaven with which I would do you homage. Instead of this, what am I? And by what fortunate accident does it happen that, being so undeserving, you should yet be my betrothed?

As to becoming a fine gentleman, pray tell your father that he need fear nothing on that score. Many of my companions are such, and some are nothing else; but I see nothing attractive in the character. Oh, no! But if I could by distinguishing myself confer honour on this simple country garb which I still wear; if I could attain by my acquirements and by an honourable character to that eminence which I witness, and of which some here occupy the very summit; if, after having attained to it, I might in my turn confer honour on M. Prevere, my first, my only master! Ah, Louise! this is the ambition which makes my heart beat. But to be a fine gentleman! Oh, no! Besides, my birth would be an inseparable bar. They call me here "the country lad;" they would then I think call me "the foundling!"

I would have concealed these ambitious desires from you, but I cannot; and besides, when you know all the motives which inspire them, they will appear to you less ridiculous. Perhaps what I am about to say, Louise, may seem like self-praise: I do not give it for anything else, but pardon me for the sake of my sincerity.

We have here one of those men who shed a glory over their country, who is distinguished in the council by his genius and eloquence, who is celebrated in other countries by his works upon legislation and politics, and who, on account of his superior talents, has been in correspondence with almost all the distinguished men of our age. During the first few days which I spent here he was pointed out to my notice. I have since then seen him frequently, and



have often heard him speak. He is a very tall; stout, man, with a large head, and features rather ugly than the reverse, but with a grave and dignified expression, and bushy eyebrows which half-veil a look at once serious and benevolent. To complete his portrait, his dress hangs loosely about him, he carries a huge cane, and wears a hat often crushed and crumpled, without his being in the least conscious of it. To tell the truth, he is little more of a fine gentleman in his habiliments than the old villagers of our own hamlet. He is called Etienne Dumont.\*

This man, who has attained so lofty a position, rose from an obscure condition. His early years were passed in poverty, and he owes everything to his own merit. What if I were to tell you, Louise, that it is this example which has inspired me, which has awakened within me the ambition of which I speak? You would smile, and with reason; but there is something more. This man—he himself—has spoken to me, cheered me, encouraged me!

It is now eight days since. M. Dervev had a *soirée*. M. Dumont was there: they are old college comrades. I never lifted my eyes from him. He spoke first to one and then to another, for every person present endeavoured to approach him and attract his notice. For my own part, I stood aloof and endeavoured in silence to catch something of what was said. As he is very near-sighted, while he was conversing he looked around the salon with an inquiring air, as if to see who were present, and every time his eye glanced towards the place where I was stationed, I felt myself trembling in every limb. At last, addressing M. Dervev: "M. Dervev," said he, "you have not introduced me yet to your young country friend. Is he here?" M. Dervev immediately came forward and took me by the hand, and whilst, covered with confusion, I was endeavouring to retreat into some corner, I heard these awful words, "Come, Charles," and as

\* Etienne Dumont, a distinguished publicist, an eminent writer, the friend and interpreter of Bentham, author of "Recollections of Mirabeau," &c. &c.

everybody immediately made way for us, I found myself the next moment in front of M. Dumont. "Here he is," said M. Dervev. Do you not see me, Louise, blushing to the very whites of my eyes, confounded, not daring to lift my looks either to the right hand or the left? But I must tell you what followed. Notwithstanding my confusion, I have not forgotten a word. The memory is wonderfully retentive and obliging in such cases.

"I have heard you spoken of, my dear boy, and in terms that make me wish to know you. This is why my friend Dervev has done you the ill-turn of thus making you a public spectacle." I smiled along with the rest of the bystanders, and at least half my terror vanished. "I hear that you love instruction—that is well; it is necessary to submit to it at your age, if you desire to be anything subsequently. Where have you commenced your studies?" "Here, sir." "But previously?" "I have lived in a village, brought up by its pastor, M. Prevere." "M. Prevere!—you have come from a good and noble school. Where are your parents?" "I have none." "And M. Prevere?" "It is he who adopted me." Whilst I pronounced these words, every one around was silent, and looked at me with interest. "Honourable!" replied M. Dumont, in a grave and somewhat agitated voice—"honourable both for the one and the other. My friend, you will succeed—you will assuredly succeed. Destitution and abandonment are powerful motives. To have everything to create for one's self is a potent stimulant. Courage! courage! Sprung from so humble an origin, you have already made a great step upwards. I augur favourably of your future prospects; and if you persevere, a noble reward awaits you. But work: do not follow the examples of our idle young men, who lead so useless a life. Sow with pains, and you shall reap with usury. Come and see me from time to time, and do me the pleasure of reckoning me among the number of your friends." As he held my hand while he spoke thus, I pressed his without replying, for I was afraid I should burst into tears at the first word I attempted to utter, so transported was I with pleasure and gratitude.

That is all, Louise. What think you of all this? This time I certainly expect a letter, without fail.

## XV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

MONSIEUR CHARLES,

*The Parsonage.*

Your narrative has touched me deeply. I was with you through all. I blushed along with you, with you I tasted all the pleasure of hearing those words so sweet and flattering from the lips of such a man. I am as proud of them as you could possibly be, and thus, Charles, if we fail in modesty, we do so in company, and I have nothing to forgive you.

Oh, yes!—noble career, and worthy of all admiration! Doubtless, there are few young men who can aspire so high, but all ought to fix their attention on so shining an example. Oh, if I were a man, my ambition would not be so much to attain to so lofty an eminence—that would be too great a wish, too difficult, too liable to disappointment—as to tread at least in the same path of knowledge, of honourable integrity, and of a lofty and distinguished purpose in life. And is it not to this goal, in some degree at least, that a youth well-employed, and a feeling of enthusiasm for superior men, invariably leads? Without that, Charles, of what value are riches, birth, or even talents? Look at Monsieur Ernest; he possesses all these, and capacities that every one must admire, but he appears to belong to that class of indolent and useless young men of whom M. Dumont speaks. And, therefore, what is he? Rich, it is true, the master of a fine house and a stud of splendid horses; but even at the parsonage, that modest theatre, what is he in comparison with M. Prevere?—And what would he be in comparison with your friend? and in what public or private position could he play a part either useful to others or flattering to himself? And if you wish me to tell you a secret, there is nothing which attracts more powerfully the attention of a young

girl towards a young person of the opposite sex, than the position which she sees him occupy in the estimation of his fellow-men.

“Good and noble school!” said he to you, when speaking of M. Preveré’s. These words are engraven on my heart. It is they which in my eyes give authority to everything else that he said to you. Yes, “good and noble school!” How inestimable an advantage to have passed our childhood beneath the shelter of a virtue so true!—to have had before our eyes so perfect a model of goodness, of patience, and of generous humanity: to have received such elevated lessons from a man so distinguished and so enlightened! Oh! I say it from my inmost soul, that if there is a career nobler still than that whose history you have traced to me, it is that of a man of lofty intellect and goodness, devoting his life to the practice of the most humble virtues, without any other motive than the impulse of a generous soul, without any other aim than that of assisting his fellow-creatures, without any other recompense than that of having walked in the footsteps of His Divine Master, without any other hope than that of obtaining, along with those whose characters he has laboured to improve, admission into the eternal mansions of the blest!

Charles, we have been favoured by Heaven. May the blessings of our childhood diffuse their influences over all the remainder of our lives!

## XVI.

CHAMPIN\* TO REYBAZ.

*Geneva.*

REYBAZ, dost remember Champin? Here it is now near six years since we have seen each other. We are

\* The letters of this personage are written in the pure popular idiom of Geneva, which is quite intelligible, however, in France, excepting a few absolutely local expressions which care has been taken to explain as they occur. Moreover, this idiom, which gains in freedom and in picturesque energy what it loses in correctness, has, in the opinion of an able critic, M. Sainte Beuve, more piquancy and expression than the Genevese style merely Frenchified, which, when rendered correct, too often ceases to be easy and natural.



getting old, my poor friend; very soon we shall no longer meet again but in the other world. Only to think! Formerly how far off that seemed to be! Here we are arrived at it nevertheless.

I should have come to see you some of these days, but that my legs refuse their services. The left is swelled, and the other is not strong on account of rheumatism, by which it has been a great sufferer. Eh, Reybaz! how fast we are going down the hill! A leg like that, which was once the envy of the handsomest! To be sure it has had its day. Dost remember at the baptism of my Catherine, with what vigour it danced? And yet I was then on the wrong side of forty.

I was saying, therefore, that I would have gone to see you—not on your own account, for I hear of you regularly—but on account of a young lad who is here, and to whom you have given your watch. Between ourselves, you were wrong; such watches are not to be had now-a-days. Ever since the guild was done away with, the trade has gone to the dogs. At present, people make just what they please, and every one has his own whim. Thin, flat, gingerbread-looking commodities, covered with tinsel and gewgaws! As for really solid, careful work, good-bye to it; I have seen such in my day, but that's all past. By the way, somebody has had yours since I had; the oil has been changed. Tell me how is this? I should think it ought by right to come to me.

As I was saying, this lad may be a good enough sort of young fellow for aught I know, but, notwithstanding, people talk about him in the neighbourhood—not in the best terms either. For my part, knowing nothing, I cannot answer them. “It is not true,” I say to them, “Reybaz cannot have done this, or I should have had a word or two to let me know. But they go on just as before, for you know when tongues are once set a-going, there is no stopping them.

They say that this lad is the offspring of a youthful fault of a person who is not named. Jaquemay thinks that he comes of a person of distinction, in whose service her brother was in '98, and she has some thoughts of writing

to him to learn the name. Moreover that M. Provere, the minister, received a secret allowance by way of annuity, to bring him up unseen and unknown at his parsonage. That there he took a fancy to your lass, by reason of which, you disapproving of it, caused him to be placed here. Others assert that they are promised, to which I answer, that those who say that, do not know you; that you would rather give her to a cowherd having father and mother, than to a fine gentleman springing from nobody knows where, or my name is not Champin, Jean Marc!

I think it would be only fitting for you to write me a line, so that I may stop their cackle when I am properly informed, unless you come yourself, which would be so much the better. 'Look here! it is the season for the *seras*,\* and I have yet three bottles remaining of Crepis, of the comet year. Come, old fellow! make up your mind. Come by the cat, on a market day, and you can stop at my house where I have a bed ready for you.

Farewell, ancient!

## XVII.

### THE PRELATOR TO CHAMPIN.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE received yours of the 8th current, which contains both truth and falsehood, as you shall see. To begin with the watch, having no boy, I said to myself that it should go to my son-in-law, seeing that I had it myself from my father. And if Jean Renaud did put it to rights and not you, it was because I had but twelve hours before me, as well to get it cleaned as to send it to the young man. There are presents which, if not made at the right time, are worth nothing.

Whereby you see, Champin, that it is quite true that I have promised Louise to him. Tell that Jacquemay that she may spare her writing, seeing that he is still meaner than she supposes. His father and mother were beggars.

\* A species of fish found nowhere but in the Lake of Geneva.

She was delivered in the woods, where they staid four days, and on the fourth took themselves off, after laying the child at the door of the parsonage. It was discovered in time to allow us to overtake them, which I recommended to be done, and to make them take it away; but M. Prevere would not hear of it, saying that they would destroy it. So he brought the boy up, for which I was long angry with him and with the young man too, as well because that Louise became fond of him, as because he was stiffnecked and thwarted me.

Seeing that they grew up, and that they had an inclination for one another, I took my measures, telling M. Prevere, plumply that if he did not send him away I would go myself. On which I saw that he had no objection to the match, seeing that he gave me to understand that, in regard to property, the young man should not be left destitute, so long as he himself had any to share with him or to leave behind him. I held firm; for, as you say very truly, I would rather have given her to a cowherd, having father and mother, than to a fellow born in a wood and sprung from nobody knows whom. When one has a family without stain, one is not in a hurry to put one on it; besides that, all the hamlet were on my side, and would not have had him, on any terms, for their daughters or their sisters. Whereupon M. Prevere sent him off, saying it was hard, but just, and that I had the right. This was on a Saturday.

That done, I talked the same day to Louise, who, at the first word, burst into tears, at the same time assuring me that she was ready to obey me and to comply with my wishes, not to blame and contradict me. With that the poor girl redoubled her caresses, constraining herself to let nothing be seen and to keep me easy, by which my heart was moved towards her. Expecting that I had angered M. Prevere, I dropped from the clouds on seeing him a moment afterwards as affable as ever, and without any trace of bearing grudge. Only, on considering that he was alone and deprived of the child that he had brought up for himself, and that I was the cause of all, and also that my wife, if she had been alive, would perhaps have been inclined otherwise than me, I felt

heart sorry; in such fashion that of the three, I looked the most distressed. I stuck therefore by the hamlet, where they kept me up by their remarks, all of them approving my conduct; so that I even took a glass merrily enough at Legrand's brother's.

I tell you all this, Champin, that you may know how it came about, and that it was not my own choice. I had therefore confirmed myself in my course, when, on the morrow, which was Sunday, a week before the communion, M. Prevere put into his prayer a few words for the lad. All fixed their eyes on me, except the girl, who hung her head; at which I was so confused that, in the psalm, I lost the note and sang out of tune, especially as there was no organ to assist me. Then came the text—they were the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself—“*Whosoever receiveth this little child in my name receiveth me.*” I felt that I was caught, and resolved to hold back no longer; it seemed to me that to do so would be to deny my Saviour, who spoke to me by the lips of his minister, and still in time for me to repent. So I did repent, and that moment I made up my mind. And good reason I had to commend myself for it after I had heard M. Prevere's discourse—so powerful, Champin, so true, that the whole parish, who were there, were in tears; so that, in default of mine, he might have had the daughter of any one whatsoever, even the Reduds', with all their property both acquired and inherited. As for Louise, at the commencement of the sermon she had left the church.

There is the story, Champin, in perfect truth, and that is the way in which I was led on. It is between God and myself. I feel neither sorry nor joyous about it; only I am easy in my mind, feeling that I am growing old, and knowing that, beyond the grave, my works alone will follow me. Besides if, by the grace of God, I may be permitted to rejoin Theresa, my dear and honoured wife, I shall be more certain of having acted as she would have done, being better than I and more charitable.

You now know as much about the matter as I do. But take care to clap a knot on your tongue, not breathing a word to any one whatever about this promise made to



a youth who has yet to grow up, and to acquire his profession before this promise is fulfilled. The thing once known, it would become a matter of necessity to take time by the forelock, to the detriment of what is prudent. So, keep silent and secret; let the neighbours gossip. I care little about it, or, to speak more correctly, not at all. Only, upon occasion, give a word of advice to the young man and keep him steady. I shall not go to see you at present, but the first time I come to town I shall not fail to do so. Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

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## XVIII.

MONSIEUR PREVERL TO CHARLES.

CHARLES,

*The Parsonage.*

It is necessary that you should suspend your letters for a few days. The emotions which Louise has lately undergone have affected her health, and although her illness is not of a serious nature, she requires repose. Let nothing, therefore, on your part excite in her any anxiety or agitation. Remain where you are until brighter days return. The least imprudence might compromise your happiness, for her father is already deeply agitated at seeing her in this state, and I have trouble in keeping him to his resolutions.

However, my dear child, do not deceive yourself respecting the nature of those emotions which have affected the health of your friend. Louise loves you, she loves you alone, and, I am certain of it, her life is henceforth bound up in yours. But how could she pass without a shock from that state of tranquillity in which her days had flowed on, to a situation so new and so abruptly altered? How could a thousand new emotions assail her sensitive heart, without producing some anxiety and trouble?—How, in short, could she, who is innocence and purity itself, pledge herself to sacred engagements which give a distant right over her person, and advance towards an unknown future, without struggles and without alarms?

These causes united are sufficient to explain to you Louise's indisposition. For some days past she has appeared to be suffering. Yesterday she did not leave the house the whole day. To-day she has not risen from bed. If her fever increases I shall call in a doctor, notwithstanding her repugnance; but it is probable that calmness and repose will prove sufficient to re-establish her health, and it is for this reason that I again insist upon your remaining at a distance.

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## XLX.

THE PRESENTOR TO CHARLES.

*The Personage.*

'Tis a sure case—I shall lose her, if the Almighty does not take pity on me! Just like her mother, the fever burns her up and makes her delirious. Nothing but fear and agitation ever since I promised her to you. She will never marry, or if she did, she would be unhappy!

I tell you, trouble will consume her. She was happy—she never will be so again. If not this time, to a certainty I shall lose her hereafter!

Don't write to her—that's what I wanted to say to you.

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## XX.

CHARLES TO MARTHA.

*Geneva.*

It is impossible, my good Martha, for me to remain here notwithstanding all they say. I must be on the spot. Tell your sister that I shall be with her to-night secretly, when you yourself can come to me and bring me news of my beloved. Martha!—Martha!—is this true? Her father has written me a note which terrifies me—I dare not ask farther—but this evening I shall know. I must keep it secret that I have left this; but if I set out again at daybreak I shall be back here at ten o'clock.

Adieu, my good Martha, I am in a state of torture. Endeavour to be there towards midnight.

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## XXI.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

THE doctor, who has just left her chamber, thinks her better. God grant it! While she was holding my hand out of affection, I felt her pulse, without seeming to do so, with my middle finger; from which I judged that the fever is somewhat abated, more by token that I rather expected it, seeing that the moon changes to-night. She asked if you knew anything about it, and was told not, in order to humour her idea; this has taken away half her disorder. Did not I tell you all her trouble comes from you!

The courtyard is never empty. They come to inquire about her from all parts of the hamlet, and farther too, for the Servins have sent. On leaving her, "No letters?" said she to me. Take your own course, then, since she worries herself as much one way as the other.

REYBAZ.

## XXII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES. *The Parsonage.*

I WISHED that the cause of my silence for the last few days should have been concealed from you; but Martha has told me all. At another time I should have blamed you, but to-day I feel that I have not strength enough. How completely changed I am! That which would have once alarmed me now touches me; that which I would have endeavoured with all my power to prevent, I now yield to without any feeling of shame; and, again restored to life, I find myself without defence against

those feelings, the too unrestrained indulgence of which has reduced me to my present state.

Charles! am I really myself, or do the paroxysms of fever still trouble my understanding? Ought I to surrender myself to that tender and consoling calm which at this moment charms and melts my heart? Yesterday, in the ravings of my delirium I asked for death, beholding in it only a deliverance from my sufferings, the termination of an existence that must henceforth be spent in anxieties. To-day, life seems to smile upon me; a sweet emotion penetrates my heart; and, softened into tenderness, I can do nothing but turn towards you. Your attachment is my consolation, my shelter, my refuge; and, although I feel my heart palpitate at the thought, I feel as if I could no longer exist if it were taken away.

What contradictions! What a confession have I dared to make to you! But then I was so unhappy. And to whom could I unburden my grief? Others, in such moments of anguish, have mothers who either guess these sorrows, or listen to the confession of them. Formerly, before I had experienced this tumult of the heart, solitude, the fields, the woods, sufficed to soothe to peace all my slight anxieties. Now I feel when amongst them nothing but a dread which deters me from them. I dare no longer remain alone, and I know not to whom to pour out the fulness of my heart. Thus, repulsed on all sides, weak and confused, I disclose what I ought to conceal, and I reveal to you the secret of a melancholy which will afflict even if it should not offend you.

Ah! doubtless, that past which is fading away like a distant dream—that happy childhood whose peace is lost—that future so obscure, so uncertain—so many sudden changes in our feelings towards each other, whilst our position appears to remain the same—these are the principal causes of that struggle under which I have sunk. I believed it possible to continue to lead that tranquil life; I wished to think that nothing in it was changed, and I forbade my heart to cherish new affections. But the more I resisted, the more I felt hurried on. The more I sought to avoid this future, the more closely it approached me. Charles!



I saw with terror that you were the sole support of my existence; and at the same time this idea formed my consolation and my only hope. I repulsed the expression of your tenderness, and yet I felt it more than ever necessary to my happiness. I regretted our former life; and yet, if you had been to me only what you were then, I should no longer have regretted it. In this hopeless contest I consumed my strength, and I sunk under the weight of a burden which I bore alone.

Pardon me, Charles, these sad confessions. Shall I ever possess more strength of mind, or become more reasonable? I dare not reckon upon it. But let me at least taste some moments of consoling hope; let me welcome illusions which charm away my melancholy; let me catch, though it be but for an instant, a glimpse of that glorious heaven which spreads itself beyond these darkening clouds. Happy days! shall I ever again recover you? Peaceful and smiling fields! shall I ever again tread your soil, free and happy? Beloved beings which fill my heart! shall I ever learn not to cloud yours with sadness!

It is midnight; Martha will not suffer me to write longer. Adieu, Charles! I know not what I have written. Perhaps if I were to read over these lines again, I should not send them to you.

Your LOUISE.

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## XXIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

It is true, then! Louise, your heart has flown to mine? In your alarm you sought a refuge with me? Can I have read aright? I blush in your presence for daring to believe these lines, and yet I have them before my eyes.

Your agitation has passed into my heart. What! for four days you were suffering, your very life perhaps was in danger; I could not write to you, I could not see you, and all at once your dear letter surprised me in the midst

of the most fearful anguish! My heart overflows with rapture—the sweetest intoxication diffuses through it a sort of delirious joy. Adieu all reserve, all bashfulness, all fear of causing displeasure! I can no longer control my transports or measure my words!

I feel that I ought to deplore the evils of which I am the cause. But how? If they have brought you nearer to me—if, henceforth vanished,—they leave in my heart only an impression of sorrow soon effaced by the purest happiness—if they are the term of your sufferings—if hope revives within your soul, and you are willing to confide to my guardianship the care of your future life—how can I feel repentance?

The future, Louise! Oh! if it were true that you would deign to seek support in the attachment of him who now speaks to you, the future would alarm you no more. No! I believe in this courage which inspires me—in this strength which nerves my arm at your slightest word; I believe in the joy I shall feel in devoting my efforts, my labours, my whole life to your service. Yes, Louise, if you only love me, from this day forth happiness is our own. Confidence, love, and hope, will shower down upon us their choicest blessings, and every day shall lead us by the sweetest paths to a future full of felicity!

Sad confessions, did you say? Ah, say rather condescending and touching confessions!—words breathing a melancholy which charms me—a confidence which transports me! Until now I knew not the highest and sweetest enjoyment that this world can offer—that of supporting the grief of a beloved being, and finding one's self the refuge of her sorrows.

I forget myself, Mademoiselle Louise, but I fear much more to mislead and deceive myself. Pardon me, and attribute all to the feelings which absorb me. I shall learn in time to overcome myself; I shall learn to speak a language which will not displease you; I shall be, I wish to be, nothing but what you desire me to be. But, for this once, forgive transports which I know not how to control.

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## XXIV.

CHAMPIN TO REYBAZ.

*General.*

WHAT is done is done. If it was your own idea, you did right to follow it. For all that, if it were yet to do, I would argue the matter with you anew. After all, a man is master of his own daughter; and because M. Prevere has done what he thought right—must I, Jean Marc, be the sufferer? Well and good, if he gives them enough of the ready. Money whitens everything.

But here is quite another matter! Your young man begins to lead a disorderly life, if he was not already spoiled beforehand, as I verily believe, for my part; since people in such cases generally get on by degrees, whereas he commences at the end.

And note well that I do not say, *I am told*, but *I have seen*! Besides, I am not at all surprised. To say nothing of his coming of such scum of the earth, he keeps company with the students. You villagers know nothing about that crew. Look you, Reybaz, the most worthless scamps, who do more mischief in a day than twenty malefactors in a week. Witness, when I lived near St. Pierre, they broke my windows, pulled down my bell, broke two timepieces, pelted me with snowballs, knocked the pail from my servant's head, hid my shutters, flung dirt over my sign, and had like to have burned me with all my family by taking away the pipe of the stove; luckily I perceived it when I was putting in wood. Well it is with them he keeps company, and especially with two who still owe me upwards of five florins for broken glass.

This however is all nothing (I may pass over his throwing dirty water on my cap, and frightening my canaries); but four days since, seeing him go out late, I waited for him to shut up below. Ten o'clock struck—eleven—my chap did not return. Good, said I to myself, I'll teach you to run about o' nights. I went and shut up; he'll be caught, thought I. Nothing of the sort. My gentleman never made his appearance till ten o'clock the next morning. Good, said I to myself, but without

saying a word, I'll watch you closely, scapegrace of a student! Evening came; he went out as before; I locked him out. Not a sign of him till ten o'clock the next day. I got into chat with the servant maid of the Derveys. I saw that they suspected nothing. Then I set Jacquemay to pick up some news. She learned nice doings—an assignation, drinking-bouts, immoral proceedings. Meanwhile I receive your letter. Good, said I, you have trusted to me, I will put you on the right scent. I know something about such matters; I have been young myself!

Here was my plan, Reybaz. I wait till evening. I had posted all the Jacquemays in the street; there they were, neither seen nor noticed, about their business. Good, go your ways. My spark leaves the house; I slip down stairs after him, and make a sign to my people; they all follow him. He takes a cross-alley. To keep dark myself, I send Jacquemay through another, to catch him at the end. But lo and behold! her great booby of a boy, who would not leave her petticoat, goes and pokes his eye against a pump-handle, and then falls to roaring loud enough for ten! All the others run to the spot screeching who would be loudest. They bathe the eye, my man escapes, and my plan miscarries.

Good, said I to myself. 'Tis my affair, I will watch his return. Accordingly, yesterday morning, ten o'clock had just struck; I at my door heard him going up stairs. "I have a word or two to say to you," I began. "Well, what is it? Do you know anything?" "A little," I replied, shutting the door. "Tell me quick! "One moment! one moment!"

I was once young myself. I saw by his scared look that the blow had told—that there was an eel under the rock. And then seating myself, "Do you think, Mr. Student," said I, "that one is porter here, without discovering that you have slept from home for three nights running?" He was struck all of a heap at this. "Monsieur Champin," said he, "silence on that subject, I beg of you."—"Do you know, young man, that I have been commissioned to watch you?"—"Watch me, if you



please, Monsieur Champin, but I beseech you strict secrecy on that head!" Then, rising, I said, "Depend upon it, I shall tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." And seeing him considering, "the truth," I repeated sharply.—"The truth? It is, that there is a person ill at the parsonage, and that I have passed all these nights to learn how she was."—"You take me," said I, "for a famous simpleton."—"It is the truth, I assure you."—"For a downright simpleton, I repeat; do you hear? Is that your last word?"—"Yes." "Enough, Reybaz shall be informed."

My gentleman then showed himself in his true colours; so nicely had I hit the nail on the head. "Mr. Reybaz!" he exclaimed, "any one else but him! Tell the whole world, but don't tell him! My good Monsieur Champin! my dear Monsieur Champin! my dearest Monsieur Champin!" "Fal-lal-lal-la!" cried I; "Reybaz shall be informed of it—I know all about your smoking-parties, your assignations; you are a disorderly fellow!" Thereupon he gave me insolence. I showed him the door, and then good-night.

This is the person to whom you have given your daughter. Having insulted me, you are aware that I cannot meddle farther in the matter, except privately. Ah, poor Reybaz! what a sad blunder you have made! So be it; what is done, is done.

Farewell, ancient.

## XXV.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE to blame you, Charles, not for having come to the parsonage, but for having come in secret. Poor Martha, wishing to conceal your visit from me, was led into a falsehood in order not to betray you. A friend of M. Reybaz's, having remarked your absence, wrote to him on the subject, interpreting the imprudence of your conduct as something culpable; it is thus that, from want of

reflection, we may at once compromise and afflict our friends. But, above all, you have forgotten that your proceedings no longer belong to yourself alone, but that all which affects you affects Louise also. In concealing your conduct for a single moment, you ran the risk of casting an air of mystery over hers, and of drawing upon her the impure breath of evil speakers. I am certain, my dear boy, that this single reflection will guarantee you in future against any similar escapade; and it is for this reason, painful as it is for me to make these remonstrances, that I would not omit this opportunity of warning you of the danger. However, Louise is ignorant, and ought still to remain so, of all these proceedings.

The dear child is now very much better. In a few days she will be able to go out; and the open air will, I hope, complete her recovery. Her illness has been severe, though of short duration; and judging from her weakness and the extreme paleness of her countenance, I fear that she will retain the traces of it for a length of time. I need not therefore repeat to you that, in all that depends upon yourself, you ought to bear gently on so sensitive a disposition, upon which all your feelings, all your expressions, and all your proceedings have so powerful an effect. Yesterday Louise was not so well. I know that a letter of yours had very much agitated her; and although her heart appeared satisfied, I could see that a powerful emotion affected her frame, which is still weak. In saying this I do not mean to reproach you; I merely wish to make an appeal to your prudence and to your tenderness.

I wish you could come and see us on Thursday; but do not speak of it to Louise. If on that day she should be sufficiently well, we shall see if we can give her the pleasure of a visit from you. In any case it is necessary, that, having quitted the parsonage in rather an abrupt manner, you should reappear in the midst of these good people, and that they should not be left to imagine that anything is changed in your connexion with them or in your relations with us. So set out early, in order that you may be with us by nine or ten o'clock. I shall

endeavour to come as far as the fountain to meet you, if I can. I embrace you with all my heart.

PREVERE.

P.S.—Poor Martha is inconsolable at having told me a falsehood; it is, I believe, the first time that such a thing has happened to this truly upright woman. Endeavour to reassure her, by speaking to her as your heart will prompt you; and let her know that I neither love nor esteem her the less for what has happened.

## XXVI.

CHARLES TO MARTHA.

Geneva.

MARTHA, my good Martha, I have to entreat your pardon. I have committed the fault, and yet yours is the repentance. I should never have done this, I swear to you, if I had believed that your love for me was great enough to induce you to conceal the truth under M. Prevere's interrogations. My good Martha, forgive me; all the wrong-doing was mine; and your only error is that of being too much attached to me. Believe me I return it with interest; and then, let it be perfectly understood between us, that, if I should ever again commit any senseless folly I must bear the consequences alone, and that no one must consider themselves bound to utter an untruth to protect me.

Come, my good Martha, it is all over. I only love you more than ever; and M. Prevere has already forgotten it. “Assure my good Martha” (he wrote me these very words to-day) “that *I do not love and esteem* her one whit less than before, for it was not she who did the wrong in any way. Shall it be made a matter of reproach to her that she loves her Charles too well!—yes! her Charles, whom she has brought up like a mother.” Tell me, my good Martha, is not all this clear and simple? Come, then, keep no more. Do you know, too, that I am coming to visit you on Thursday, at perfect liberty, and in the open day! Ah, take more care than ever of

Louise, that she may be well enough to see me; and, above all, hush! about this visit—not a word!

I am wild with joy—I play a thousand antics through my chamber, even though I am alone. It is not so much on account of Thursday (which I rather fear) as on account of a letter which Louise wrote me, and which you prevented her from finishing—ill-natured that you are! For this I cannot forgive you. No, positively—I am mad angry with you. If you were here I should embrace you—yes, my old Martha, on both your cheeks, and dance a *rigadoon* with you and a thousand follies. I tell you, Martha, I am mad.

M. Prevere says she is so pale. Ah! then she will only be more touching, more lovely still! Paleness is more becoming to that countenance, so full of tenderness and grace. Is it not, Martha? It harmonizes better with the softness of her voice, her looks, her manner. Oh! if you only knew how I love her, you would forgive me for having betrayed you into this fault. There are moments when this feeling almost deprives me of my reason.

By-the-bye, winter is coming on. The woollen petticoat herewith sent is for you, the cap for Antoine. This is the first use I have made of my own money; for, do you know, Martha! I who am at school have myself a scholar? Adieu.

Your affectionate

CHARLES.

## XXVII.

CHARLES TO M. PREVERE.

MONSIEUR PREVERE,

Geneva.

Yesterday I fully expected to have seen you before I left the parsonage, and, after I had taken leave of Louise, I went in search of you. Then it was that I heard of your unexpected departure for Chonilly, and that it would be in vain to await your return. I then set out on my way towards the town, where I arrived so late that I found the gates closed. I was so happy, and my mind was so



fully occupied, that this mischance scarcely affected me; and, looking round me for a sheltered spot, I there patiently awaited the approach of day.

I have then seen Louise once again, M. Prevere! I have seen her again, not now as the companion of my childhood but as the companion of my life! I have seen her again, and, if I may venture to believe it, peaceful and happy. How can I relate to you that interview? Scarcely a word was exchanged between us; and, as for what was passing in our hearts, where shall I find words capable of expressing it?

It was after leaving the Legrands', that, turning towards the terrace, I perceived Louise seated with Martha under the acacias. Agitated at seeing her, I paused, not knowing in what way to accost her; although, from the time that I received your letter, I had done nothing but endeavour to prepare myself for that moment. But Martha saw me, and exclaimed, "Here is M. Charles!" Louise instantly rose; but before she had time to speak, I was holding her hand in mine, though I dared not press it to my lips. "I did not wish," said I, "to see you without your permission—" I was unable to proceed. On her side, a deep blush had replaced the paleness of her cheeks, and, still too weak to overcome her emotion, she said nothing, but turned her eyes upon me bathed in tears. When afterwards I would have let go her hand, she retained mine in hers, and gently pressed it; and at that moment it seemed to me, amidst the delicious emotion in which I was plunged, as if our hearts were united for the first time and for ever.

Louise seated herself again, and we remained for a long time in the same place. Those tender expressions which are so easily written, cannot be spoken. We were at first constrained; but our bashfulness insensibly yielded to the pleasure of that interview, a feeling of confidence calmed our agitation, and already, even without having exchanged a word, our emotion had found a language far sweeter than any that the voice could utter.

I tell you everything, M. Prevere. Ah! how could I conceal anything from you? But I know not why, I feel

some embarrassment in giving free expression before you to sentiments at once so new and so transporting!

After some time we rose together at the sight of M. Reybaz, who was advancing towards us. He must have thought that Louise looked more happy than usual; for although he had spoken to me in the morning in a gloomy strain, his spirits appeared to rise at the sight of his daughter, and he welcomed me with more kindness and cordiality than usual. His presence emboldened us to enter into conversation, and we prolonged our walk in the calm and quiet interchange of remarks, in which Louise, recovering her self-composure, displayed all that grace and charm which are natural to her. At our first setting out she leaned upon her father's arm; but he himself said, "Here, Charles, this is now your place." I received Louise's arm in mine; but immediately a mutual restraint succeeded to the previous freedom of our remarks, and the conversation had completely dropped when we reached the parsonage on our return. There I expressed to Louise my fears that I had fatigued her. "No," she replied, "I am happy, and I have to thank you for it." Then it was that in my transport I seized her hand, and, after kissing it, I withdrew.

You have now, Monsieur Prevere, an account, as well as I am able to relate it, of this interview, during which I experienced more deep and vivid emotions than ever before visited my heart. I feel as if I were another being, and as if the happiness which I before enjoyed, although so unutterably great, was augmented beyond measure. Ah! M. Prevere, when I reflect that all this is your doing—that for so long a time your care and solicitude have been preparing this felicity for me—I can only weep with gratitude, while I bless you for your benefits and adore your goodness!

I feel that this interval has been lost for study, and yet the moment approaches in which I must give my account of what I have done. I shall return to my duties with renewed courage. I forgot to tell you that I am giving lessons to a child. I would have declined, knowing too well how incapable I am as yet of giving instructions to

others, but the obliging solicitations of M. Dervoy, who thinks I shall improve myself by so doing, have decided me to make the attempt, and I already begin to feel an interest in my undertaking. Your respectful and affectionate

CHARLES.

## XXVIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

I MUST begin, Louise, from this day to learn to conquer myself; for what should I say to you were I to allow myself to be carried away by my transports! I shall not attempt therefore to describe to you the state of my heart. Too many conflicting emotions struggle in it for mastery—too many remembrances crowd upon it—too much happiness overflows it at this hour. As your image rises before me I feel a thrill of agitation hitherto unknown, and I am obliged to withdraw my eyes before I can address you with calmness.

Behold me then returned to my cell. But what a void do I experience! How difficult to compel myself to remain there. Everything is so cold, so chilling, so melancholy, where you are not! I conceive a sort of hatred towards these books, these walls, these houses, which shut out the country from my gaze; it appears to me as if I had returned from some enchanted land, which I mourn after with tears, to vegetate in a dull and dreary desert.

How short were those moments!—and I dared not speak to you! Why did I not prostrate myself at your feet?—why were my lips chained in silence? How could my heart, penetrated as it was with love and happiness, remain mute and without the power of utterance? Oh! surely it must be that there are feelings too deep for words! Once I could express to you without restraint every emotion of my heart, now I can do so no longer.

After leaving you I set out homewards, carrying with me a treasure of dear recollections. I still beheld your features, I still felt your look, your hand still touched

mine, your presence still surrounded me, to intoxicate me with its charms. I took my way across the fields that I might meet no one. The sun was just setting when I reached that spot, where, formerly, when banished from the parsonage, I gave free course to my sighs. Oh! unlooked for happiness! I was now treading that very place, oppressed with joy, my heart throbbing with delight!

When I reached the city, the gates were closed. I was almost pleased to find them so. It seemed to me as if I were so much the longer with you. As the evening was lovely I continued to wander through the neighbouring lanes, and when the moon had set, finding myself near the lake, I took shelter in a boat which was fastened to the shore. It was here that daylight surprised me, and obliged me, though with regret, to return to my own abode.

## XXIX.

## THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE this moment left the little one, who is just beginning to get the better of her disorder. As she will not take any physic, we have kept her upon milk diet. It is that of our goat, whose dam suckled you—a healthy creature and a good milker. It strengthens her little by little; her colour is returning, her strength along with it, and then her prattle, which is better still. Another thing has given me pleasure; the day before yesterday she began to spin again, which she had not done for a long while. Still she is not well enough to set about that endless letter-writing again with you, which wears her out, whilst you yourself waste your time. It is to spare her the fatigue of it that I give you this account of her to-day, holding you excused from answering.

To my thinking, instead of writing so much, you would do better to take pains only to learn your business, at which, as well for the sake of gain as of character, you ought to be working from morning till night. Here, where you have grown in stature, you remained backward



in learning; that is one reason for pressing on towards the mark without loitering to frolic by the way. As for Greek as well as Latin, M. Prevere says that you are not one of the first; and as for the geometrics, physics, and mechanics, barring the four rules, you are not a very good hand. Yet these are but the first barriers which you have to clear, before you learn the Hebrew of the Prophets, which they read backwards; divinity, into which science must work its way by the sweat of the brow, and not expect to pick up what it wants for the trouble of stooping; and lastly, how to fashion a sermon that is worth hearing. If, then, you wear yourself out in daily letters, which fix your mind elsewhere than on your business, how can you hope to arrive in time? Louise is engaged to you, but in order that the promise stands good, you must first have a profession. Forward then! not like those idlers who saunter along; but like a man who, wishing to reach home before night, quickens his pace, and in a short time puts a great deal of ground behind him.

So much for learning; but as I said just now, the inside of the heart, the temper of the mind and character, demand some labour too—especially for you, still rough and unlicked, hitherto untaught to curb the vehemence of the blood, the intemperance of the will, the hastiness of action, and who have more than once left it a matter of doubt whether you would turn to what is honourable and discreet, or to what is wilful and irregular. If it is by correcting these vices of your nature that you will render yourself worthy that Louise should have you for a husband, it is also by rooting them out of your heart, as one does the brambles and the weeds out of the field, that you will fit yourself to become a minister of the Lord, and to teach others. You will therefore have to use the bill-hook, sometimes to lop, sometimes to cut into the quick, or with the point to dig up the earth down to the very root; and so much the deeper that not knowing what stock you spring from—though on the other hand, it is certain that those who abandoned you were, in so doing, great sinners—you ought, more than any other, to guard against those less worthy germs which you find in your-

self, and which may not be seed brought by the wind to be carried away by the wind again, but native seed, tenacious in its growth and spreading apace.

Fall to work then, voluntarily and stoutly, in the government of your nature; be severe towards your propensities, and mistrustful of the only patrimony which your father and mother have left you, namely, a rebellious blood, and a judgment which is deficient in weight and measure, but which is yet in time to acquire them. Transform yourself, in the first place, into a young man willing for the yoke, that you may afterwards become a servant of Jesus Christ, and a pastor of souls; bearing well in mind, that, if you are not capable of taking the first of these two steps, still less will you try to take this second and much more arduous one. Follow, as your pattern, M. Prevère, who has brought you up; note well in what respects you are not following in his path, and then I shall have security for my daughter. The day before that Sunday on which I promised her to you, I was not at a loss to whom to give her; and, if I preferred riches to an honourable life, I should know where to make one, not far from hence, as happy as an angel of heaven. Is it not true that this good conduct and this good name, to which I sacrifice wealth and rank, you owe it to me as well as to Louise? Strive then to acquire them; and, when you have them, I shall hold you quits and retire contented.

To begin, be more sparing of letters. As regularly as the day comes round the letter-carrier brings them; and, after taking up your time down yonder, they take up Louise's here, and make her sometimes uneasy, sometimes thoughtful: it was they that threw her into that fever, from which she recovered with difficulty. Your marriage cannot but be distant: be frugal of your communications, and begin as you mean to end. At the rate you go on now, you will at the end of the year have finished all your paper and emptied your bag of gossip. At the time when I was courting Theresa, who was from the hamlet of Dardagny, though we lived at a distance from one another, our mutual thoughts were sufficient for us; and, each busy, she

with domestic concerns, I with out-door labour, we seldom saw each other in winter and almost as seldom in summer. Once a month she came to our preaching here, and, without a single letter or many words, we told each other enough by our looks, at the moment of meeting, to leave nothing for the tongue to add. Next month, it was my turn to go to their church, and, the rest of the day, walking in the meadows, or sitting under some walnut-tree, we passed the hours in feeling that we were together, much more than in talking, till evening, when, in company with her mother, she accompanied me some distance on my return. It was without any more stir, and without encroaching upon our work, that we spent those same hours during which you are writing volumes, to the detriment of your studies; and yet affection sprung up between us, just as the sap rises and the tree throws out its leaves better, in every way, in a quiet field than in one where you are continually turning up the ground.

Moreover, the little one is her mother all over, except that, having studied in books, she has more learning. But, if the bark is different, the wood is the same, and only too much so, for she frets herself just as Theresa did, about anything and everything—finding cause to grieve where others would see only subject for rejoicing, and by so doing wearing herself out before her time. It is for you then to avoid disturbing her every day by remarks, the waiting for which makes her uneasy, and the recollection of which agitates her. A letter every eight days seems even more than reasonable measure; and when you do write, instead of what is exciting, give her something sober and amusing—the events of past times, rather than those of the current year, or the year that is coming, and the like.

One word more on an article closely connected with the other, inasmuch as you may chance to send her books to read. The other day, I observed that a book which she had in her hand made her visibly ill, so that she came late to supper, and, after taking two or three mouthfuls, retired. I told Martha to get the book for me, as I wished to look at it.

Don't you know it? 'Tis about two children who are brought up together, and then it ends badly. The girl, whom they call Virginia, is drowned, rather than submit to be saved by a naked man from on board a ship. The lad, whom they call Paul, thus left forlorn by the death of his sweetheart, goes moping about with grief, and at last dies; and then the two mothers, and then the maid-servant, and then the man-servant, who is a black—in short, there is not one of them left. A diverting history, is it not? Fool! said I to myself—for all these burials and so forth began to shake me—are you going to be caught by these lies? Meantime, the young girls are caught by them, and go and make themselves ill about moonshine and nonsense. If Louise must read, then, try to get her something more cheerful and that ends better.

Martha, *à propos* of her petticoat, tells me that you have already employment which brings in money. Is that true? It would be a good omen to me, besides being so seasonable; for, in town, living is dear.

We have begun peeling flax: yesterday at the Legrands, this evening with us. We shall have a reading of the almanac for next year, which is just printed. It promises wet weather. That will suit well enough for my hay, but woe to what is left of my vineyard!

M. Prevère and the little one send their friendship: add mine to them.

REYBAZ.

### XXX.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*General.*

YOUR father, Louise, sees things in a terrible point of view, and I find it necessary, before I answer his letter, to wait until my irritation has somewhat subsided. He thinks that I write to you too frequently, that my letters do you harm, while on my own side that they cause me to waste my time. He wishes to put me on an allowance of only one in eight days! If so I should indeed be miserable! Give me the assurance at least that if I disobey him from time to time you will not be very angry with me.



Write to you less frequently! What a strange and disagreeable idea! Write to you less frequently!—What should I gain by that, if not to think of you more constantly, when, even as it is, I do little else? It is only when a letter is despatched, when, having told you everything, I have signed it, folded it up, and despatched it, that I take advantage of the moment of relaxation which follows, to pursue my studies. That moment is about to be taken from me, and I no longer know either how nor when I shall study.

Does he intend at least that you should write to me so much the more frequently? He does not explain himself upon this point. Good heavens! what is to become of me otherwise, during my seven days of silence and darkness! Have pity, Louise! Explain all these things to him, and give me some advice that may assist in delivering me from this miserable situation.

He tells me also to write to you on subjects that are sensible and amusing. Sensible? How does he think then that I write to you? Or does he mean that I have any wisdom to spare? The rest of his letter does not authorise me in drawing so flattering a conclusion. I shall try, however; but the moment I fancy myself writing to you *sensibly*, I burst into a fit of laughter. It was already quite enough for him to require matter of recreation from a poor youth who spends his time enclosed within four walls, and with his eyes fastened upon his books.

Here is the way in which I am recreating myself at present. I have to decipher an infernal Greek tragedy, in which people that I know nothing about, utter, in a language which I do not understand, things which do not in the least concern me. Not very amusing so far. What is even less so is the necessity I am under of admiring all the beautiful passages in these conundrums, by means of a Latin note, which I learn by heart that I may be enabled to repeat it to the proper person at the right moment—the said moment being next November. I make all haste, therefore to decipher this tragedy, I make all haste to discover its beauties, I make all haste to have done with its miseries, which weary me more than

they touch me; and after all, when I have got to the end, it is only to begin some other piece of gramary equally disagreeable. It is thus that I pass my days; and I would love them, I would cherish them, and through all my after life I should remember with delight those sweet hours in which I deciphered with so much labour these pages, written a couple of thousand years ago for the misery of all future students, if I were only at liberty to write to you whenever I pleased; and, above all, if not a line of yours, already far too rare, were to be retrenched.

All, however, is not gloomy in your father's letter. On the very page in which he has given me such severe advice, he speaks of you, and tells me of your returning strength and of your beverage of goat's milk. Ah! Louise, dare I utter it? This is only a simple matter, a most usual occurrence, but yet I find in the idea an inexpressible charm. And where your father mentions that this goat is the descendant of that one which nourished my infancy, I felt almost melted to tears. Thus, then, you recover health from the same source from which I drank in life. Thus, from our very earliest years, by every tie, even by those things which are purely accidental, fate unites us, draws us together, makes us friends to friend, almost as sister and brother. Ah! if I were but at the parsonage now, how many times should I have already been to visit, to caress, that poor goat, and, when I return, what attention and what friendship will I show it!

But, speaking of animals, you cannot imagine, Louise, how much I miss their society, to which I was so long accustomed. Not a cow, not a sheep, scarcely a dog, and even of these not one which I can call my own. Besides, the dogs here are a civilized, degenerate race, impudent rather than wild and boisterous, seldom if ever the companion of man, but wandering through the streets searching for and quarrelling over any filthy scraps they may meet with. Nothing of Dourak's honest roughness; nothing of his clean, shining coat, bright with the health of our country fields; nothing of his bold and generous

courage, his extravagant joy, his eye of fire, his joyous bounds. Ah! these tiresome, these contemptible dogs! To say nothing of a little cur belonging to two old ladies, our neighbours, who live below us—a strange animal, washed, combed, and dressed like any town beau, and the only one of his class with whom I have even a passing but pleasureless acquaintance. This little coxcomb has blood-shot eyes, a ridiculous expression of countenance, looks as if he were always in a shiver, and has an ill-tempered snarl which sounded to Dourak's ear monstrous in the last degree. Such as he is, he is nursed and pampered by the two ladies, and detested by every other being in the house. For my own part I have nothing to reproach myself with concerning him, farther than having sometimes compelled him to measure his strength against the cats, who sometimes comb his hair according to their own fashion. It is on this account that the two ladies hold the whole tribe in horror, and are constantly calumniating them.

Only imagine that my fondness for rustic animals sometimes goes so far as to induce me to leave my studies, and descend into the streets on market-days, for the simple pleasure of walking among the teams of oxen, of asses, and of old horses, which are drawn up in a line, with their loads of hay, of wood, and of various sorts of provisions. I feel then as if I were in the midst of my friends, and the odours of the herbage and the stable please me far more than all the musk and amberggris of the perfumers. In this way I have also a chance of meeting with some one from our village, whose face I know, and to hear, perhaps from Redard or Turian, a hundred little bits of news, every one more interesting than all the despatches of the telegraph or the gazette. On Wednesday I had a chat with Brachoz, whom I found much pulled down by his accident, and nevertheless already beginning to *refresh* himself again. He asserts that on that day especially, when he had his roll down the hill, he had drunk nothing but water. But the night being dark, and his eyesight not being good, he could not see a finger-length before him, and that caused all the mischief. "Judge for yourself," said he to me, "if it was likely I could have been

drinking when I was carrying home a new pickaxe that cost me eighteen florins—not a sou less.”

But I am writing to you all sorts of stupid and tiresome things. The reason is that I am no longer in my usual vein, and your father's instructions are the sole cause. I dread to think that when this letter is finished my pen must be laid aside for eight whole days, and I am embarrassed between my impatience to tell you everything at once, and my desire to prolong, indefinitely, the pleasure of conversing with you. Once again, Louise, take pity on me, and arrange this affair. Although you could doubtless do very well without reading my epistles, I could not live two days without writing to you; and if your father keeps to his resolution, my only resource will be to write to you every day in the week, and send you the whole packet on the Saturday. But then it would seem as if I were sending you volumes! For pity's sake arrange this affair, and let your next letter restore liberty to your impatient and affectionate

CHARLES.

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## XXXI.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*General.*

Do you remember, Louise, that pretty poem of Gessner's, in which he describes the first navigator, instructed by love to scoop out the trunk of a tree, to hoist a sail, and to row towards a verdant shore, from whence he returned with that beloved being of whom his heart had dreamed. Something like this has happened to myself; only I did not find on the verdant shore her, whom moreover I did not look for; and my bark, instead of bringing two lovers into port, entered it empty and capsized, whilst the first navigator had enough to do to cling for safety to the Niton stone. This is a rock the surface of which is almost on a level with the water, and which the antiquaries of the country pronounce to be an ancient altar erected to the Neptune of our shores. Upon this altar I spent an hour, which appeared to me a very long one; and



I think it must have been a terrible task for the priests of those times to pass a whole day there offering up their prayers in the midst of a north-east wind.

You must know then, Louise, that all along the margin of the lake there are meadows and trees and charming little bays; and, in some places, rustic inns where they will serve you a country repast beneath the shade of the overhanging foliage. One of my companions and myself had formed the project of taking an excursion to reconnoitre these picturesque shores, and yesterday was the day fixed upon for our enterprise. We embarked early in the morning in a little boat which we managed ourselves. The heavens were radiant, the lake clear and unruffled. Our skiff, stealing along in the shadow of the hills, entered the bays, doubled the promontaries; and I cannot tell you with what delight I once more breathed the pure, fresh air, and allowed my gaze to wander in unrestricted freedom over the lovely scene around me. My companion, more accustomed than I to such excursions, smiled to see me animated, full of ardour, and as much enchanted with the scene as if we were really entering on the discovery of a new world. After passing in the morning one of these little inns of which I have spoken, called Montalègre, we returned to it about one o'clock, burnt by the sun, overcome with fatigue, and almost expiring with hunger and thirst. Our hosts hastened to spread a table for us beneath the shadow of two old walnut-trees, already tinged with the hues of autumn, but still clothed with dense and wide-spreading foliage. Ah! Louise, what an omelette! what wine! what bread! and what water! Everything appeared to us like nectar and ambrosia; and the people of the inn nothing less than Baucises or Philemons—benefactors as generous as they were incomparable. Our repast ended, we sought out a retired and grassy spot, where the silence, the shade, and the murmur of a rivulet, invited to repose. We slept there two hours.

During this time the north-east wind had risen, and when we opened our eyes we perceived, through the foliage of the trees, waves of a very respectable height, on the

summits of which our boat was dancing. The people at the inn advised us to set off without delay, inasmuch as, according to their account, the wind would continue to increase. For my own part I made very light of their prognostics. My comrade, on the contrary, turning coward on the instant, proposed that we should leave our boat there, which we could return for the next day, and regain the city by land. I would not listen for a moment to this disgraceful proposal; and, leaping into the boat, I urged him also to enter. He refused. Then, seizing the oars, I was soon far from the shore, on which he stood for a long time expecting that I should be compelled to return. But his very presence piqued my honour; and besides, fully occupied as I was in the management of my vessel, I soon remarked neither his calls nor his signals.

In the mean time the waves rose higher and higher, and, casting my eyes over the swelling waters of the lake, I could not perceive a single boat upon its surface. It was then that I began to fear that I had been perhaps more imprudent than my friend had been cowardly; I resolved therefore to regain the shore of the lake as quickly as possible, but this step had now become impossible. I was still able to manage my boat as long as I kept it before the wind, but the moment I attempted to turn its prow towards the shore, I found that the waves took it on the beam and threatened to capsize it; I was obliged, therefore, to return to my first position as speedily as possible. Nevertheless I was not alarmed yet; after all, I was driven towards the city, and I did not doubt but that I should soon reach it. Only my boat danced up and down after an extraordinary fashion, and the waves every moment broke over me in white foam. Then, foreseeing the possibility of an involuntary bath, I endeavoured to take off my outer garments; but it was impossible for me to abandon the oars for a single moment without incurring the danger of immediate shipwreck, so I was obliged to content myself with kicking off my shoes, which the water had glued to my feet. While I was performing this operation I perceived upon the road which skirts the lake, below Coligny, groups of spectators who had

collected to gaze at me. The sight of these people, their agitation, their cries, which I fancied I could hear, convinced me that I was in peril; and then, filled with alarm, I rowed with renewed vigour, in the hope of reaching the rocks of Niton. When I arrived within some little distance of the second, I felt that the current and the wind were combining to drive me past it; and, taking my resolution, I seized one of the oars and leaped into the water. At the same moment the boat capsized. The rest was nothing; fear gave me strength. Even before I touched the rock, I felt a conviction that I should reach it in safety: the only precaution necessary was to avoid being dashed against it: and, to escape this calamity, I was presenting the end of my oar to the granite, when, being gently lifted up by an enormous wave, I found myself deposited upon the rock almost unconsciously. In the transport of my joy I kissed the granite, for you were at that moment restored to me, Louise; my heart bounded with gratitude, and gave vent to its joy, aloud, in accents of thanksgivings!

However, all was not yet ended. The shores of the lake were covered with lookers-on, who, seeing the boat overturned and not perceiving me reappear, either clinging to its sides or mounted on the keel, imagined that all was over with me; but when, emerging from the surge, I was seen standing on the rock, they uttered a thousand exclamations of joy, and I could distinguish, in the midst of their tumultuous agitation, gestures and signals of encouragement, of good wishes, of hope. Some of them even endeavoured to come to my assistance; but scarcely had they launched the only little skiff that was moored upon the margin of the lake, when the waves dashed it violently back upon the shore and broke it to pieces. They then hastened to seek in the neighbouring creeks for some sort of vessel more capable of resisting the waves. But while they were engaged in this search, deliverance reached me from the other side of the lake. My situation had been perceived from the deck of a brigantine which was lying there at anchor, and three Savoyard sailors embarked in their jolly-boat to come to my rescue. When they approached the rock as near as the violence of



the waves would permit, I threw myself into the water, and an instant afterwards I climbed into their boat amidst the acclamations of the crowd. As I was anxious to remain incognito, I entreated these men to take me back with them to their vessel, where I found a good fire and a glass of wine extremely acceptable. One of them went ashore to borrow me some clothes from my companion, which the latter brought me himself; and in the evening, the wind having now fallen, they pulled us to Molard, from whence I regained my little chamber, without M. Dervev, and, above all, without the porter Champin, who is always so ready to report unfavourably of me to your father, having discovered anything of the matter. This adventure therefore I hope will cost me nothing but a hat, a coat, a pair of shoes, and a little cold. To counterbalance which I have the immense pleasure of finding myself still in the world, without taking into account the experience I have acquired, and also the lesson I have received, which I am resolved to profit by. So, Louise, for once only do not, for pity's sake, scold me.

Such, then, is my story; and yet, with this arrangement of writing only once in the week, I must have kept all this from you for six days more? It is not possible! It would be absurd! Even you yourself would feel anxious. Arrange this affair, then, Louise—do arrange this affair. I dare not mention the matter to M. Reybaz, who would consider my expostulations only as a proof of my want of docility. But you whom he listens to without distrust, you who have so much influence over him, you whom he loves so tenderly, intercede, I entreat you, for a poor exile, shipwrecked, with a cold in his head, and, in addition to all this, afflicted with Greek to translate, equations to reduce, without a hat, without a coat, and without any other consolation or blessing than the moments he passes in writing to you every day.

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## XXXII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

YOUR narrative, Charles, has caused me as much grief as alarm. I perceive from it that your rash disposition remains unchanged, and that the fear of afflicting those who love you is not sufficient to inspire you with the most ordinary prudence. If indeed you had rushed into the same dangers with some noble end in view, I should have been the first to approve of your conduct, to express my admiration of it; but to expose yourself thus inconsiderately, uselessly, and without a motive, and as if you were playing with the promises you have so often made, only shows a disposition which I cannot look upon without sorrow. I do not scold you, but I must express my pain and regret.

I conjure you, Charles, correct in yourself this imprudent rashness, or how much have we both to dread, even when, as on the present occasion, you have not fallen a victim to your temerity. Do you not feel that you are furnishing grounds for my father's anxiety, and even running the risk of endangering all the promises which he has made you? Charles, is it for me to say these things to you, and have you never thought of them yourself? Ought you to place yourself in the position of having anything to conceal from him, and in imposing secrecy on me? Would you make no sacrifice in order to please him, to inspire him with a feeling of security, instead of acting so as to revive in his breast those old prejudices which he had to banish before giving me to you. Have you no wish that I myself should be at peace instead of living in a state of constant anxiety and agitation. I tremble even now at the thought that I might have lost you; and I shall tremble for a long time to come lest my father should hear these things, lest he should draw his conclusions from them, and lest they should disturb that tranquillity which I can see he has begun to feel, and which you can only maintain by abstaining from all such rash and hazardous exploits.

I am too much distressed, Charles, to write to you at any length to-day. It is impossible for me to withdraw my thoughts from what you have related. I shall endeavour to forget it, and at the same time to believe that you are sensible of my anxiety. I have not been able, shaken as I am, to take any steps in that affair which you have begged me to arrange, and in which I find myself as much interested as you. Until I have spoken to my father I beg of you to conform to his will, but without however depriving me, during these intervening days, of a few words from you, for which I feel the utmost anxiety.—

Your affectionate  
LOUISE.

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### XXXIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

YOUR letter, Louise, has opened my eyes. I have done wrong. I am deeply to blame. I throw myself on my knees before you, and my promises this time are serious. As to your father, I did not think of him until afterwards, but soon enough to ensure that he shall remain in ignorance of what has occurred. So no more sorrow, Louise; forgive me, smile upon me, I implore you! and let this little cloud pass away and leave our happiness unclouded and serene as before.

I should have done better to listen to the advice of my companion; but this was my only fault, Louise, for the rest did not depend upon myself. Henceforth I swear to you that, in such circumstances, I will listen to everybody except myself. Besides, do you imagine that I should wish to find myself at another such fete, Louise? I was terribly frightened, and it was fright alone which endowed me with such surprising vigour. But it is very true that when I had conquered my rock and the danger was over, I experienced one of those intense bursts of joy which fill the whole soul. I shall forget this joy, Louise, to think solely of your sorrow, which it is my most anxious desire to dissipate, and of your peace of mind, which I would preserve with the most jealous care. So once again, no more alarms; let the gentle light of

hope and contentment beam as formerly upon your brow, in order that, assured of your pardon, and certain that you have confidence in my promises, I may give full expression before you to all the happiness which I feel springing up in my bosom.

My companion has the word not to breathe a syllable of what has passed, so your father will know nothing of it, especially if he should read the newspaper, which, this morning, gives an account of the affair in the following words:—

“The day before yesterday, our lake had nearly become the scene of a deplorable accident. A young Englishman, hearkening only to that eccentricity of disposition which is peculiar to the sons of Albion, chose for an excursion on the water the very moment when the north-east wind was blowing with the utmost violence. It was in vain that the groups of by-standers called to him to return to the shore as quickly as possible; he obstinately pursued his way, until at last his boat was overturned. Fortunately some sailors came to his assistance and drew him out of the water. We think it our duty to take this opportunity of blaming our authorities for not forbidding the watermen to hire their boats when the lake is stormy. Is it not their province to take all means of preventing fatal accidents, and to ensure, as far as in them lies, the security of parents of families?”

Do you not admire, Louise, the way in which, by means of the newspapers, everything is made known, and everybody goes on his way contented. This article has amused me greatly. To-day, at dinner, it afforded M. Dervey an opportunity of dilating upon the eccentricity of the poor English, and relating a number of amusing anecdotes illustrative of it. On the other hand, the porter, fastening upon the last paragraph of the article, has chosen it as a text on which to found a vigorous tirade against the present government, whom he accuses, *à propos* of this Englishman, of mocking the people, and drowning virtuous citizens. The secret of the matter is, that M. Champin is an old patriot of *ninety-two*, and that nothing pleases him that has taken place since that time.

But *à propos* of M. Dervev, Louise, I reproach myself for having as yet said nothing to you of him or of his family. To endeavour to charm away your displeasure, I shall draw all their portraits for you, not forgetting M. Dervev, who has nevertheless very little physiognomy. He is a little, corpulent man, somewhat rubicund, whose expression is always the same, and always benevolent. He passes for a good preacher, though for my own part I should have thought him more flowery than eloquent: his discourses resemble his countenance. He has a sonorous voice, but his finely turned periods have nothing of that powerful, touching, and animated style, which distinguishes M. Prevère. In other respects, he is goodness itself, and that warmth which I cannot discover in his sermons I find in his manners, in his actions, and in his domestic life. His gaiety is full of gentle good humour, like that of an upright man, who, fulfilling his duty without too much trouble, afterwards takes his ease with contentment. He imposes no unnecessary restraint upon me, and is always disposed to be pleased with what I do, if I only appear to find myself happy with him. Oh! the excellent man, Louise!

Madame Dervev is a stout lady, more grave and more sensible than her husband, but not so amiable, or else amiable in another way. Sometimes she jokes with me, sometimes she reprimands me, twice she scolded me, though only as people do a child to whom they wish well. But what consoles me in these cases is that she also rebukes M. Dervev, and that, if necessary, she can scold him too. It is Madame Dervev who holds the reins of government in the house, but in such a way that if she were to surrender them, everybody would outtreat her to resume them again. At first she was constantly speaking to me respecting you, and, as she made no secret of the matter, she embarrassed me exceedingly. One fine day I told her all. Since that time she no longer speaks to me of you in the presence of her daughters; but, whenever we are alone together in the drawing-room, then comes a host of questions to which I make a host of answers, and these are moments of delicious discourse. She already



loves you, she has your interest at heart, she is anxious to know you. She tells me unceasingly that I ought to amend, to improve myself, and to make a thousand efforts to render myself worthy of sharing your fate and contributing to your happiness. Then I make such fervent and sincere protestations that, at the moment, I feel as if I could attain perfection, and as if I were capable of securing the happiness of the whole world. Every instant, Louise, I think or even utter such presumptuous absurdities, so much do the depths of my tenderness and the transports of my happiness dazzle and distract my reason.

I have kept the demoiselles Dervey for the tit-bit. Only imagine that the eldest is called Louise! Ah! what trouble I have had accustoming myself to allow her to bear this name! It was absolutely necessary, however. She bears this name therefore, she will continue to bear it, but there is only one real Louise in the world, and the more false ones I see, the more do I adore the true. Mademoiselle Louise Dervey is the exact portrait of her father, gay, natural, easy-tempered like him, with a pretty face and a rather portly figure—altogether what is called a handsome person. She loves balls and fetes, she loves the town and the country, she loves to be busy and to idle—nothing comes wrong to her. The porter tells me her affections are engaged, and that perhaps even now the whole affair is settled; to see her, I should never have suspected that such was the case. One delightful quality which she possesses is her uniform good humour. She is in fact like M. Dervey, who cannot endure the thought of displeasing, or even of not pleasing, any one whatsoever. With me she is frank, gracious, and amiable. I never find in her any of that rather affected stiffness which is generally laid to the charge of town ladies; and, in a ball, she is as natural and unstudied as she is at home—neither more nor less. On this account I am very fond of dancing with her; she is the only young lady among those with whom I am yet so slightly acquainted, from whom I am certain of finding as gracious a reception as any other person whatever.

The youngest is named Sophia. She is sixteen years

of age. She is at the same time more delicate, more reserved, and more satirical than her sister. She is indifferent to the pleasures of the world, and is devoted to reading and retirement. Her disposition is capricious; sometimes she jests, sometimes she is excitable or softened, according to the subject discussed. She makes much less noise than Mademoiselle Louise, but has much more influence in the house. These two sisters, so different in taste and character, love each other tenderly, and it is delightful to see them together. The eldest really takes her place as the junior of her sister, and the latter only uses those advantages of wit and intellect which she possesses, to love, appreciate, and display the good qualities of her beloved sister. Her manner to me is extremely reserved, but engaging; and although she makes every one else, even her father and mother, the subjects of her gay and refined wit, she always stops short of me, whether from pride, from modesty, or, as I am inclined to think, from consideration for a young man whom she knows to be in a different position from those around him. Among all the young ladies whom I have had the opportunity of approaching here, she is by far the most distinguished. Her features are finely formed; she has a speaking look; her laugh, always gentle, is full of grace; her whole air and appearance are marked by an innate elegance which imparts itself to every gesture, to every action, and, I might almost say, to the very chair on which she sits, and the table on which her arm reposes.

Such, Louise, are the excellent people in the midst of whom I am living, in the midst of whom I am dying of *cunui*, in the midst of whom I am in despair that I am not allowed to pass my life in some other place—at the parsonage for instance, or at Monomotapa if you only were there, or in the East Indies, if you were inclined to make a tour through them. I love them, but I remain a stranger to them. I am a spectator, sometimes jealous of their happiness, of their family union; but I cannot share in it, because my whole heart is centred in another spot. Sometimes I even fancy that in a more gloomy dwelling, where

all around me would have been less friendly and less amiable, I should have felt myself more according to my taste, because then I should have been more my own master; but this is an unworthy sentiment which I blush to entertain, and which I treat with the utmost contempt whenever I feel it arising within me. And yet if these same people knew you, if they had only once seen you, I could not then endure others. That moment must come, I dream of nothing else, and Madame Dervev thinks of it very seriously.

The days are growing short, and the balls have already commenced. Madame Dervev procured me invitations, and afterwards compelled me to attend them; it is a species of tyranny which I find a little hard. The crowded rooms stifle me, and the violins give me no pleasure at all. I think over our evenings at the parsonage, I picture you to myself stripping the stalks of hemp or listening to the reading of the almanack, while your hands were busily employed spinning the glossy thread. Ah! those evenings, that heap of hemp, our little circle gathered round the fire in friendly chat, the return to the parsonage beneath the shade of the linden-trees! Recollections which at once charm and oppress me with melancholy! Simple but heartfelt pleasures! How can I hope to meet you in the crowded drawing-rooms of a city, in the whirl of factitious amusements?—how find you again where Louise is not?

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### XXXIV.

• LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I ACCEPT your promises, Charles, and, relying upon them, I see the cloud which overshadowed us pass away, and that peace and serenity return to which I now yield myself up with increasing confidence. The newspaper is admirable, and worthy of all praise for settling this affair

so well, and rebuking the authorities. The English alone have a right to complain; but it is possible that, flattered at seeing their eccentricity thus publicly acknowledged, they may pass it over.

Your picture of the Dervev family interested me extremely, and I see plainly that if your eyes strangely deceive you in your estimation of a certain young person here, it is not because you do not know how to see and appreciate with justice and accuracy whenever they are directed elsewhere. I now both know and love all those people as well as if I had seen them, so that, in truth, it seems almost a superfluous ceremony for you to present me to them. I appreciate Mademoiselle Louise, and I admire in her those good qualities you describe, which I consider more valuable than you appear to hold them, and which, although they may not be brilliant, are far from being common. Contrary to your opinion, I believe that this is the true Louise, never anxious, never melancholy, made both for enjoying happiness herself and imparting it to others, and whose easy gaiety does not rob her of a single virtue. I am already bound in the ties of friendship to Mademoiselle Sophia, in whom I discover more attractions but not greater merit, less kindness of heart but more captivation of manner. In each of them I recognise the result of the example which their two parents set before them—the one supplying a pattern of gentleness and amenity, while the other, Madame Dervev, is all action and bustle, guiding and reprimanding her household. I am grateful to her for making you a sharer in the benefit of her experience, and I love them in my heart for the affection they have shown you. This, Charles, is the impression which your letter has made upon me.

It is on account of the pleasure which it has afforded me, and urged by the desire of insuring myself more than one of the same kind each week, that I have endeavoured to arrange what you call "*this affair*." But I have neither failed nor succeeded. My father does not wish to restrain us, but he remains convinced that we write too much. Thus, Charles, we must take a middle course, and



satisfy him half. I should love to receive your letters every day—twice a day, indeed, if that were possible. Nothing gives me so much pleasure, nothing so certainly chases away those slight clouds which still sometimes obscure the serenity of our firmament; and yet even I cannot help suspecting that so much writing must distract you from your studies, or else overburden you by adding to them. The month of November draws near; and, if I ardently desire your success, I cannot without anxiety anticipate the effect which a reverse would have on the mind of my father. Set my mind at rest upon this point at least, and be assured that I am ready to sacrifice all the pleasure I derive from our correspondence, if a single moment of the time which you devote to me, would tend to assure better your prospect of success in the aim which you are striving to attain.

I must confess there is one thing which causes me anxiety, besides your excursions on the lake, your ramblings in the market-places, your balls, your drawing-room conversations, and the cold, of which you tell me nothing; and this is the almost disrespectful manner in which, in your last letter but one, you speak of your studies. I think everything that is in Greek beautiful, and, especially, a tragedy. I have a great respect for science, and yet I see that you view all these things only as wearying necessities. Or else have I misunderstood you? and did you only intend by what you said to amuse me with a little pleasantry? I am anxious enough to fear, and simple enough not to be able to guess, your meaning; enlighten me a little, and do not feel offended at my uneasiness. Oh! Charles, how I dread this month of November, and how impatient I am until it is over.

You will receive along with this letter a little basket of grapes. \* They are the first which we have gathered, and are from the vine which stands between M. Prevere's windows and the projection of the church wall. You will certainly recollect it. Some busybody remarked when we were gathering them, that on this very vine, at the same season last year, not a grape was to be found. "On account of the thrushes," suggested Martha. Everybody

here is occupied with the vintage, which will commence in ten days; and in those evenings of which you draw so poetic a picture, there is now nothing spoken of but gallons, measures, and presses; and in the day-time it is a perfect thunder of hammers engaged in repairing the casks and putting them in a condition to use. So, Charles, learn to be content with your lot. Enjoy all those valuable resources which are offered you in the town, without regretting the tranquillity of the country; while, for my part, I shall endeavour to accommodate myself to the clamour of the country, without too much regretting the pleasures and seductions of the town.

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### XXXV.

#### CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

*General.*

I sit down to answer your letter, M. Reybaz, and to thank you for your kindness in sending me news of Louise. I am certain that the milk of that poor goat will be of the greatest use to her, since I, who in my infancy received no other nourishment than that afforded me by its mother, have reached the age of manhood without being as yet visited by any malady.

I am still distressed beyond measure, M. Reybaz, to find that the extent of our correspondence displeases you; and if it were not for the fear of appearing to you indolent, I should endeavour to show you that, by writing less, I should lose much more time. Do you think it possible that I can prevent myself from thinking often of Louise? Most certainly you cannot suppose that possible. Thus it follows that, if I am obliged to keep my thoughts pent up in my brain, they increase, they extend, they mix themselves up with whatever I am learning, they expose me to the risk of making a sad mess of what I am studying, or at least of studying without system and without result. If, on the contrary, I commit my thoughts to paper, fold up that paper and despatch it to Louise, I

find myself relieved from them, and I enjoy repose for four-and-twenty hours. Then I can devote my whole mind to my studies. I work at my Greek, at my Latin, at mathematics, and *belles lettres*; and my thoughts not being distracted by other things, I feel that I am storing up clear and distinct information, and useful and durable knowledge. As for this bag of gossip, I must abstain when I have emptied its contents; and I only ask permission to use what it contains.

You propose to me, Monsieur Reybaz, examples which I must look up to with respect and affection. But you are well aware that among those who are betrothed, some are silent and reflective, others open-hearted and communicative, so that it is impossible to apply the same rule to all, without running the risk of doing an injury to the greater number. It appears that you had only a slight acquaintance with your Theresa when your attachment was first formed, and that your intimacy advanced gradually and gently; but with Louise, to whom I have chatted away every hour of the day for years, I only pursue our old habits of conversation, though even then it is abridged at the least nine-tenths; for if any one had put into writing what we used to chat together, he would have had in three days a volume as large as the Testament. Lastly, Monsieur Reybaz, you saw your Theresa every month; and it is certain that when people meet, more can be expressed in a moment by a look, than by the pen in a month: but remember that during five months, I have been only once at the parsonage, and I scarcely yet know whether I shall be suffered to return again before next spring. Acknowledge then, Monsieur Reybaz, that your example is not a case in point, and if you allow my reasoning to be just, leave me at liberty to write as often as I please. I shall be truly grateful.

Do not, however, imagine that I neglect my studies. But at present I could not occupy the entire day with them, even if I were so inclined. After the month of November, when I shall have entered as a student, the case will be different; but 'for new cases new counsel.' In the mean time suffer me to take advantage of my leisure

hours, and to enjoy in freedom that happiness which I owe to you alone.

You ask me, Monsieur Reybaz, if it is true that I have already an occupation which brings me in money. Nothing can be more certain. There is a little boy, the son of one of M. Prevere's friends, to whom I am teaching what I have myself been taught—a little Greek and a little Latin, which are not, I must allow, of the very best quality: but as you yourself have said, if there is no dishonour in selling wine, however weak it may be, there is dishonour in selling it adulterated, however rosy it may appear. I sell my Greek and Latin, therefore, which are neither rosy nor adulterated, and I receive in return a *louis d'or* every month. The first of these is now safe in my drawer. I intend to keep it as a sort of commemorative medal. The second is on its way, making only a step a day, but it will arrive like the tortoise in time. In truth I look at this golden piece with so much pleasure, that I am afraid of becoming miserly and avaricious.

And then, this is not all, Monsieur Reybaz. There is a lady in the house who has proposed that I should go through his college exercises with her son every evening. The terms have not been mentioned, but I am certain that another *louis d'or* is on its way to add to my hoard. When I am able to earn two *louis-d'ors* a month, I know no persons in our village whose occupation will be more profitable than mine. That will make one hundred and five florins a month; one thousand two hundred and forty-eight florins a year. It is already wherewithal to support a family. And if I were to double that sum, as it is very possible I may succeed in getting four lessons a day instead of two, I should find myself in possession of a glorious total of two thousand four hundred and ninety-six florins, which appears to me to be perfect opulence. From this time until my wedding-day, I economize this glorious total, and I am at once in a condition to provide a startling wedding-feast—a wedding-feast like that of Gamacho's, Monsieur Reybaz, which you may read of in those volumes which I have sent Louise. She has not yet requested me to send her any books, but without



waiting for that I send her Don Quixote, and after you have read this book, will you tell me, if you please, if you think it would be possible to find one in the world more enlivening and amusing.

I now come to the advice which you have given me, Monsieur Reybaz, and which I receive with respect and submission, deeply impressed as I am with a desire to satisfy you, and convinced of the right which you have to require much from me. I know that I am still very ignorant; but my path is marked out, and if I cannot shorten the road, you may depend upon my doing nothing through my own fault to prolong it. I feel both the strength and determination to pursue it steadily, and to distinguish myself amongst those, who, having nothing of their own, everything to acquire by their own exertions, and so much to be grateful for, devote themselves to serious study with a view to obtaining a profession, and with the view also of gaining esteem and consideration. Fear nothing on this score, Monsieur Reybaz; I have already gained sufficient insight into these studies to know that I shall succeed as well as most others, if I only apply myself with courage, which it is my intention, as well as my promise to you, to do.

As to my character, I am aware of all my deficiencies, and I do not complain of your observations, which appear to me severe but just. I hope that these germs of evil may be considered rather as faults than as evidences of depravity, and faults may be amended if you are only allowed time. But along with your advice, grant me also your indulgence, Monsieur Reybaz; if you are too impatient I shall be the sooner discouraged. These criminals of whom you speak, we have never known. I have committed follies far more frequently than crimes; I am not altogether bad; I feel some good within me. It is from them perhaps that I inherit this better part of my sad patrimony. Permit me to refrain from accusing or branding them with infamy. I shall never be a Monsieur Prevere, but he shall be my sole and constant model. I shall never be worthy of your angelic daughter, but I shall lead an honest life, enjoy a fair

name, and, without equalling her, I trust I shall render her happy. If I abate some part of your requirements, be assured that it is that I may the better keep my promises; and as for your ever holding me acquitted, never, Monsieur Reybaz, never! Had I all the virtues of M. Prevere—were the mystery of my birth to conceal nobleness and opulence—were I upon a throne!—Never! For now I am less than nothing; without relations, without merit, without profession, without fortune; and yet you give me Louise, sought for by others, and made to ennoble the noblest, and to enrich the richest!—

Your affectionate

CHARLES.

### XXXVI.

#### CILAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

*Geneva.*

SINCE my last, in which I told you of the pranks of your young man, you have grown quite shy, and I no longer know the colour of your ink. Well and good, if, after the scolding I gave him, he is convinced that the man who weds is the man who is steady; and that in marriage, as in hunting, he who follows two hares at once runs the risk of losing both. The fact is that, having watched him closely, I know that he has not since been from home at night, except one Thursday, when he went out in the morning and did not come back till long after dark. Wishing to know something about it, and as I have again begun to chat to him from time to time, in order that I may be useful to you upon occasion, I led him to the subject of this Thursday. He then told me on that Thursday he had made a boating excursion with a comrade in the morning, and the *Bise*\* springing up, they left their boat at Montalegre, and they, on their return at night, they stopped, along with the crowd, to see that Englishman who was wrecked through the fault of the authorities, as you may have read in the newspaper. For

\* The north-east wind.

all this, he is a cunning blade this son-in-law of yours; and, ever since he has perceived that I look after him, there is nothing to find fault with in anything he lets me see; so that as yet I can only tell you about appearances, rather than what is behind.

Since the letter in which you related to me, from ancient to ancient, how you were led on, I have kept my tongue in my teeth; and the more easily, that I found little pleasure in spreading the news that you are giving your only child to a foundling. But, if I keep my remarks to myself, I cannot prevent those of others from reaching my ears; and I have always had large ones from my school-days, when I was an ass. Of these remarks some have made the drum tingle at a fine rate, though I believe them to be false, since in your letter from ancient to ancient you say nothing on the subject. And then, false as I consider them, it is hard to help seeking a cause, especially since, as the proverb says, "there is no smoke without fire." Make what you please of these stories, but I should not be Champin, Jean Marc, were I to conceal them from you. Here they are then.

They say that, in your parts, there is a notable who has been casting a sheep's-eye at your little one, finding her to his taste. And then that, knowing that girls of her sort, though of humble condition, are only to be approached with a good motive, he asked her in marriage—applying, according to some, to M. Prevere to manage the business, according to others, coming and throwing himself at your knees. That you, finding yourself already entangled with this lad up here, and seeing too late what you have been led into, for want of the courage to turn back have rejected this notable. Some say that it is a Monsieur Jaquier, mayor of Bourdigny; others, a person who has purchased a property at Peicy; others, what is better than all, M. Ernest de la Cour, of an ancient family, and who lives in a chateau with his mother. For your guidance, such is the rumour; write to me then what you wish me to know about the matter; or, if they are only empty stories, inform me of it.

And, for my part, I say beforehand that they are but idle stories: the great scarcely ever seek to come near the little. As for equality, that never was but once. And, even in those times, a cobbler could more easily get to be Syndic\* than a tradesman obtain the hand of a daughter of the upper class. On the contrary, our magnificoes and most worshipful† have never felt too proud to play the wooer to the daughters of humble folk like us, let them be ever so homely. One day, in full court, Lambert had the boldness to say, with reference to one who was upon his trial:—"These aristocrats talk about their manners, without thinking that our daughters are with us to confound them; and, while it is at our hearths that they amuse themselves, have they ever seen a single one of us take the liberty of paying our court to their belles?" Lambert spoke the truth.

And then, set in case that wealth and quality were willing to come and seek your daughter in your sacristy, where would be the obstacle, even yet? As if, in regard of marriage, there was any other engagement binding than that which is signed at the mayor's. Before this paragraph is put on paper, duly stamped and registered, all the rest is mere phrases, which words make and which words unmake. How then should I go and believe that Keybaz would let go the substance to catch the shadow? So I say to them often enough, particularly to Jacquemay, "Rather than not prate, you would set it afloat that the Lake of Geneva had emptied itself into the Rhone, and you would find simpletons enough to hurry off for the purpose of picking up the fish."

Say then merely that there is no truth in the story, and, with a word, I will put an end to all this gossip.

JEAN MARC, the ancient.

\* First magistrate of the Republic.

† Our great folks, our aristocrats, or as they still say at Geneva, in allusion to the quarters of the upper town, *our high people*.



## XXXVII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

IN waiting so long before replying to you, Louise, I have given you a great proof of my submission. It is true that in the interval I have pleaded my cause with your father, but I feel unable to await his decision. Before the wines are barrelled, the cellars shut up, and the price determined, it is not likely he will resume his pen. You are very right in saying that the season of the vintage is not the most agreeable period of the year in the country. With the poets perhaps it may be, and for toppers still more so — Brachoz, for example. But for an actor in the scene, all is cold, wet, fermentation, and sulphur. Everything smacks of the cellar, the *paches* and the song. The grass which is cut down still remains sweet and fragrant, and, after the rich spoil is carried away, the fields remain even greener and fresher than before; their youth is revived, and they are thrown open to the race or the village sports. But these grapes, what becomes of them? Where are the glowing and ruddy clusters? And when they have been gathered from their stems, do you know anything that looks then more melancholy than a vine-tree? If I were monarch of the earth, I would burn all those props, and all these staves and casks, and I would only allow the vines to clothe the slope of some overhanging hill, or spread out upon some sheltered wall; and never should the rich sun-ripe clusters be unworthily trampled upon, and never should the fumes of the wine be the cause of precipitating to the bottom of a *moraine* the Brachozes of my realm. If I were monarch of the world, I would burn the towns and thin out the villages, I would set fire to the four corners of Greek and Latin, and while you, the well beloved queen of mortals, should occupy yourself in spinning hemp or plying your needle in the mansion-house of the parish, I would set out, accompanied by my *debonnaire* minister, M. Dervev, each mounted upon a mare from the pastures, and visit every

cabin, chat at every threshold, rest ourselves under the porch of every house, sit down at table with the shepherds, and everywhere ascertain if our subjects were good and upright, as all men ought to be; peaceable and contented as are the wild herds in their solitudes, who are clad and nourished by the hand of Providence.

Listen to Homer, whose pages I am at this moment deciphering, and in whom I find pictures that enchant me, beings who live, who sing, who disport themselves beneath unclouded skies, and skim over the verdant carpet of the fields; young girls who play at rustic games; and princesses who wash their robes in the running waters! Listen! it is of Nausicaa, a princess affianced to a prince, the daughter of the king of the Phæacians, that the poet speaks:—

“Soon they reach the smiling margin of the river. There roll eternally the countless waves of the clear and rapid stream. Plunged into its sparkling tide, the garment, however sullied, is at once cleansed and purified.

“Unyoking the mules they (these ladies) leave them to graze at freedom upon the sweet herbage which clothes the declivities of the silvery stream. In the mean time, the young maidens unload the car of their vestments, immerse them in the crystal waves, and afterwards wrample them with their feet upon the margin of the river. When the garments have resumed their spotless purity, they spread them on the pebbly beach, washed by the ever-running waters. Then Nausicaa and her companions take their repast on the bank of the stream, waiting until the rays of the sun have absorbed the moisture of their garments. As soon as their strength is renewed by this refreshment, they lay aside their veils, and make the ball fly aloft through the air.”

This picture transports me; I have translated it with delight, I have learned it by heart, and shall never forget it. Ah! what enchanting truth and simplicity! Primitive manners, which may well make us ashamed of our own! Poetry, language, pictures, beside which our own appear cold, pale, majestic, and rigid as marble! Long live Alcinous, king of the Phæacians! Long—thrice long

live his charming daughter, Nausicaa the laundress, Nausicaa who unyokes the mules, who tosses the ball, and who sings beneath the willows by the river's bank! But I must finish this history for you.

This game, Louise, with which the princess and her companions amused themselves, we have played at more than once. You pretend to throw the ball to one of the players, and really throw it at another who is not expecting it. And now behold the sportive Nausicaa in her turn whirls aloft the light ball, which, wandering in its direction, falls into the rushing tide. The young players utter a simultaneous cry, and this cry awakes a man who is sleeping under the thick foliage of a neighbouring tree. This man is Ulysses, who had been shipwrecked on that coast some hours before. Emerging from the thicket, he makes his appearance in the light, all covered with the slime of the sea. The companions of Nausicaa run to hide themselves amongst the reeds which line the shore; the daughter of Alcinous alone remains, she listens to the supplications of the unfortunate stranger, and replies as follows:—

“Stranger, you do not appear an ordinary man, nor destitute of wisdom. Jupiter, according to his good pleasure, dispenses happiness alike to the good and to the wicked. It is he who sends you these reverses; do thou then support them with fortitude. But return thanks to fate which has led thee to our country: thou shalt want neither garments nor any other assistance which an unfortunate suppliant may require. I will guide your footsteps to the city. This land is the country of the Phæacians, and yonder walls are their dwellings. I am the daughter of the magnanimous Alcinous who reigns over them.”

Nausicaa then turns towards her companions, and recalls them to her side. “All the poor, and all strangers,” said she, “are sent by Jupiter; the slightest offering alleviates their lot. Present to our guest, ‘I command you, such food and beverage as we possess.’” While Ulysses is refreshing himself, and washing in the stream to cleanse himself from the slimy foam which covers his



limbs and his hair, Nausicaa folds up the newly-washed garments, lays them on the car, the mules place themselves in the yoke at her summons, and immediately, taking the reins, she conducts Ulysses to her father's abode."

Is not this passage beauty and simplicity itself, Louise? Clothed in the glowing colours of the text, is not the whole scene real, touching, full of nature, of light, of life? And if these are manners and customs which once existed, as we cannot doubt is the case, is it not a matter of bitter regret that not even a trace of them is now left us?

And now do you wish to know why I am irreverent, as you call it? It is in the first place on account of the immense labour and pains which it has cost me to arrive, by dint of grammar and dictionary, at that point where I have been able to gain a clear view of Nausicaa and her companions, and of Ulysses dripping with the sea foam; and afterwards the less troublesome but more unpleasing task of losing sight both of that clear view, the purity of its impression, and the sense of its beauty, amidst an indigestible mass of trashy notes appended to every verse. Picture to yourself clouds opening beneath your feet, and brilliant landscapes, appearing, and then, at the very moment when you are contemplating them with rapturous delight, behold new clouds close in before you—and adieu to all the enchanting landscapes!

It is necessary that I should prove what I assert by some examples? Here are two or three of the annotations, which, *apropos* of Nausicaa, I have to store up in my memory for next November.

And, in the first place, Bitaubé (a translator) assures us that an ordinary poet could not have imagined a scene like this, but that Homer finds every instant new flowers springing up under his feet. I have learned that by heart. Then Madame Dacier (a washerwoman, I presume) discusses the reason why Nausicaa washed her clothes in the river rather than in the sea, which is close at hand. This reason is, because the sea-water is greasy. I have learned that by heart.



After this a person called Suidas, entering on a close investigation of Nausicaa's ball, attributes to Nāusicaa the invention of the astronomical sphere. I have learned that by heart.

After this, Rapin (a capital name that!) thinks the adventure rather indecorous, and is of opinion that Nausicaa granted too long an interview to Ulysses. I have learned that by heart.

After this, Hezychius—but without going further, Louise, where is Nausicaa, the charming washer-maiden? Where are her young companions, Ulysses, the reeds, the stream? Far, far away! Behold in their place, Rapin, Bitaubé, and that woman Dacier, throwing their greasy water at each other! Behold Hezychius and Suidas weighing the verses, sifting the words, and measuring the particles! Behold a band of robbers despoiling the noble blind, dividing the leaves of his book, scribbling, daubing, until, in place of their former spotless purity, there remains only a blotch of ink. Most assuredly I detest them, I insult them, I mock them, and appear to you irreverent.

And besides, Louise, all the passages are not like this of Nausicaa, neither are all the Greek poets like Homer. Nevertheless, fear nothing, and, above all, do not speak of sacrifices. This task may perhaps be wearisome, but it is not difficult, and without being too presumptuous, I can assure you that I have studied it in such a way as not to fear the result. Reserve your anxiety, therefore, for next spring, when, having been admitted as a student, I shall be called upon to undergo a more serious examination, and before severer judges. After having given you this explanation, I must leave you to return to my pick and shovel, well assured that if you have the least love for me you will compassionate me deeply. But think of three weeks longer!

One word more. That vine-tree—yes, I know it, as well as many others, which know me no more. But, Louise, press the hand of that worthy Martha for me, who has always defended me without ever being my accomplice. Besides, she spoke the truth; for, was there ever a bunch of grapes eaten by the thrushes which I did not get the

credit of? Receive, with mine, the thanks of all the Dervy family, whom I have regaled with your grapes, with the history of the vine, and with Martha's speech.

YOUR CHARLES.

## XXXVIII.

### THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

*The Parsonage.*

IF I have not answered yours, now of old date, in which you inform me that the lad has been sleeping from home, it is because I knew more about that matter than you. When Charles said that he had been to the Parsonage, he told the truth; though you, deceived by those tattlers you have about you, refused to believe him, choosing rather to impute to him actions which show that you knew nothing at all about him. Not that I mean to sound his praise, for I am but too well acquainted with his defects; but the danger for him lies neither in dissoluteness of manners nor in drinking-bouts. On that point I am entirely tranquil, and your reports have not aroused me.

As for all that talk which proceeds from those same tongues, let them wag, but refrain yourself; that is the request which I have to make of you, from ancient to ancient, as you say. Whether a notable has asked for my daughter, or whether no person has asked for her, I cannot see what business those gossips you speak of have to inquire about it, any more than yourself, who know that she is promised to Charles, as I have written to you, and as I now confirm. As for not keeping my promise, that is not my way of acting, were it even required, as regards wealth and rank, to let go the substance in order to seize the shadow. This is all the answer I have to give you, without preventing you however from silencing those gossips, whose cackle seems to me to have no end in view whatever but to make mischief.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

## XXXIX.

MONSIEUR PREVERE to MONSIEUR DERVEY.

*The Parsonage.*

It becomes necessary, my dear brother, that I should make you acquainted with the present position of affairs here, in order that, being equally cognizant with myself of Charles's situation, you may be the better able to enlighten him with your counsels, or to give me some opportune advice if the occasion should require it. In truth, there are moments when the destiny of this child, which I confidently believed was henceforth assured, appears to me to be still precarious and encumbered with obstacles. For the present, the most important point is to guard him against every temptation to imprudence, every pretext for rash and thoughtless exploits, so much is M. Reybaz, on whom his future hopes entirely depend, disposed to judge him with severity; and so much is he disinclined, even to this very hour, to place any confidence in the character of this youth, whom he has accepted for his son-in-law with repugnance, although at the same time with sincerity. But to enable you to understand better what I wish to say to you on the present occasion, I must go back a little.

You are doubtless acquainted, at least by name, with the family of De la Cour. They are the only persons of distinction in my parish, and reside in that beautiful mansion, the avenue of which opens about three or four hundred yards from the parsonage, and which is known here by the name of the *Chateau*. It is now eight years ago since M. De la Cour died, leaving a son about four years older than Charles. Until that time the young lad had lived in habits of intimacy with Charles and Louise; but henceforth these relations insensibly ceased, notwithstanding the efforts of Madame De la Cour, who trusted that they might prove a beacon against the quicksands on which opulence, the want of occupation, and the absence of all restriction, might shipwreck her son.

This lady was well-intentioned, rather than endowed with firmness necessary to carry her good intentions into

effect; besides, she idolized her son. This young man was not slow in fulfilling her worst anticipations. He embarked in a career of dissipation, and afterwards in one of libertinism; and when not more than one-and-twenty years of age, he had already involved in ruin the daughter of one of our most estimable and honest peasants, Elise Coissat. After this scandalous affair he withdrew from the neighbourhood for some time. Separated thus from his ordinary companions, touched by the affliction of his mother, or perhaps moved by repentance (he was still very young), he returned by degrees to a more regular course of life; and we ourselves, when he made his appearance again at the parsonage, happy to see him thus amended, received him from time to time, and resumed our visits at the house of Madame De la Cour. From that time (this is now better than a year ago), this lady, trusting that marriage would be the means of fixing her son in that honourable course of life she so ardently desired to see him pursue, endeavoured to find him a wife amongst the young ladies of their own condition. I have heard that overtures on this subject were made to the parents of a young lady whose religious instruction you have directed—Mademoiselle Dupuech. However that may be, it was while Madame De la Cour was occupied with this design, that her son, certain of being opposed by her in the views which he had already secretly formed, concealed from her with the greatest care the new attachment which had sprung up in his heart.

This young man had lost sight of Louise while she was yet a child. He met her again a young woman, uniting to the graces of her person the attractions of a refined and delicate mind, and that sensibility, full of modesty and reserve, which often charms more deeply, and exercises a more sudden empire over, a young man who is not a stranger to vice, than over one who clothes all women alike in the spotless mantle of his own purity. He became strongly attached to her, and so much the more deeply, that, already obliged to control himself before his mother, and dreading to awaken the jealousy of Charles, whose



sentiments he suspected without as yet fearing his rivalry, he dissembled the passionate feelings which filled his soul, awaiting the time when he should make himself acceptable to Louise, and dazzle Monsieur Reybaz with the *prestige* of his rank and opulence. Under the influence of these sentiments he entirely reformed his life, gave up all acquaintance with disorderly companions, and resumed his connection with that class of society to which his rank gave him access. Constantly occupied as I am with the care of my parish, I had not the opportunity, or perhaps I had not the ability, to penetrate the designs of this young man. Besides my own project in Charles's favour was still only a wish, a hope born of that affection, which I fancied I saw subsisting between Louise and himself. Above all, I was far from supposing that the only scion of a family rich and proud of its antiquity, could every dream of allying himself with the humble daughter of a country precentor.

Matters were in this state, when, last June, in consequence of several conversations which I had with M. Reybaz, I decided upon sending Charles to a distance, and I confided him to your care. Charles set out for Geneva on the Saturday. It was on the evening of the same day, that M. Ernest De la Cour, meeting M. Reybaz, who was walking alone in the fields, accosted him, engaged him in conversation, and, whether he had formed his plan beforehand, or whether he was tempted by the opportunity, and carried away by his warmth of feeling, he spoke of marriage, and asked him for Louise's hand. M. Reybaz, without being influenced by the rank or riches of him who made this demand, did not hesitate a moment to answer by a refusal. He had present to his mind the past irregularities of this young man's life, the unfortunate daughter of the peasant Coissat, and he felt in his heart a just and natural repugnance to make any compromise with vice. Moreover, he entertained too high an opinion of his daughter to believe that she would ever place any consideration above a stainless morality and a justly honoured reputation. The young man felt deeply humiliated by this refusal. He insisted

upon knowing the motives for it; and M. Reybaz, with all his *brusque* sincerity, did not conceal them from him. They then separated; M. Reybaz persisting in his refusal, and M. Ernest in his protestations of love for Louise, of entire reformation in himself, and of hope that time and reflection would change M. Reybaz's determination.

You already know, my dear brother, how on the following day, hearkening to the pious appeal of charity, M. Reybaz, who had just refused his daughter to M. De la Cour, generously bestowed her upon my poor Charles. We agreed together to keep their projected union a profound secret. Many motives conspired to render it our duty. Charles's youth, the uncertainty of his future prospects, and, looking still further, the desirableness of postponing the marriage until he had been consecrated as a minister, besides other reasons. But however great our precautions on this subject, something of the engagement entered into by M. Reybaz has transpired; and, without a single person in the village being able to ascertain the exact truth, every one suspects that Louise is promised to Charles, and the daily arrival of letters from the latter has not a little contributed to confirm these reports. It is these very reports which, having reached the ears of M. De la Cour, have induced him to take the recent step to which I alluded at the beginning of this letter, and the effect of which was to determine me to write to you.

After the refusal he had received, the young man, who appeared only to grow more ardent and more passionate from the very obstacles which he encountered, confided everything to his mother, urging her to adopt his views and to second his desires. But he was unable to succeed. This obscure alliance shocked too deeply this lady's pride, her aristocratic prejudices, and all the feelings and habits in which she had been educated. With the firmness of wounded pride, she positively declared to her son, that he should never obtain her consent to such a union, while the latter, relapsing immediately into the rebellious spirit of his ungoverned days, declared in his turn, that he could do without it, and that he

would never marry any other than Louise. When, subsequently, he heard it reported that Louise was engaged—that she was engaged to Charles, the foundling adopted by M. Prevere—he gave way to the most frantic bursts of disappointed passion and humbled pride; and in his fury he did not even spare his mother from his reproaches. Resolved to clear up all his doubts, and to strike a final blow, he took the opportunity on last Thursday, when Louise and myself were absent from the parsonage, to present himself there, and obtain an interview with M. Reybaz.

The young man had apparently traced out for himself a line of conduct which he designed to pursue. He conducted himself at first with great moderation and address, and displayed considerable ability in renewing, in an indirect and cautious manner, the proposals to which he had on the previous occasion received a formal refusal. M. Reybaz soon thought it better to interrupt him, saying that to the same request he must make the same reply; and afterwards requested him to speak of other things. Upon this M. Ernest, suddenly laying aside that tone of calmness and moderation which he had at first imposed upon himself, burst into a transport of passion; tears gushed from his eyes, and, humbling himself to the most urgent supplications, he at last threw himself on his knees before M. Reybaz. The latter, without being in the least shaken, said to him: “You would sooner move a rock; let this answer satisfy you, M. Ernest.” “Say, rather,” exclaimed the young man, in a tone of rage and disdain, “say, rather, that you refuse your daughter to M. De la Cour, to bestow her upon M. Prevere’s foundling!” “It is possible,” replied M. Reybaz; “and am I not at liberty to do so, since he pleases her, whilst you could not?” This expression, which, in the mouth of M. Reybaz, was simply the expression of truth, penetrated deep into the soul of M. Ernest. He turned pale, his fury gave way to an appearance of the deepest dejection, and he withdrew without uttering a word. I am ignorant if he has really renounced all hope, if he is more irritated than discouraged, if he is even capable of conquering that attachment which he has hitherto nourished in his bosom. All that



I know is, that I have this morning heard that Madame De la Cour and her son have made arrangements for passing the winter in the town, contrary to their usual custom.

It is this circumstance, my dear brother, which has made me write you this long explanation. I am wholly ignorant as to their intentions; but I fear the feelings which this young man may cherish on account of his abrupt refusal, and I dread the result when he finds himself in so close a vicinity to Charles, and when he may perhaps meet him in general society. The latter is aware of M. Ernest's first proposals, but is ignorant, and I hope will ever remain so, of these subsequent proceedings. If he were, in any way, to hear of them, I should fear everything from his natural impetuosity, aggravated by his distress of mind. Jealousy, indignation, and alarm, would not fail to carry him away, and perhaps lead to some collision between himself and M. Ernest, the consequences of which might be fatal. Never, assuredly, will M. Reybaz fail in his engagements; but, even if he were, it certainly would not be in favour of M. Ernest. But M. Reybaz considers himself pledged to Charles only so long as the latter, by his conduct, not only gives him every day increased assurance of his future steadiness, but moreover, and above all, so long as he does not awaken in his mind his old suspicions, his secret mistrusts—even now scarcely stifled, and ready, on the first alarm, to resume all their former empire over his mind, without being controlled by any consideration whatsoever. It is here, my dear brother, that the danger lies—a danger that overwhelms me, every time that I reflect, on the one hand, on the unyielding nature of M. Reybaz, always upright in his views but obstinate in his prejudices, open to alarms, abrupt and secret in his resolutions; and on the other, on this young lad, without experience, impetuous in his disposition, incapable of calculation or management, whose least error of conduct will come under the searching eye of a father, at the same time full of tenderness for his daughter and severe and exacting towards a son-in-law, whose birth he always feels to be a secret offence and vexation.



Watch over him, then, during this winter, and, above all, at this present crisis. Keep a close guard over the remarks which may be made in his hearing on the occasion of the arrival of the De la Cours at Geneva; and, whenever you perceive any gloom or uneasiness in Charles's manner, inform me immediately, in order that, whilst making him aware of circumstances which I should have preferred to keep concealed from him, I may at the same time offer him suitable injunctions and advice. Lastly, my dear brother, I place the greatest dependance at all times upon the counsels which you will yourself bestow upon him; and, now that I have made you acquainted with all the circumstances, I confide in your vigilance and friendship, of which you have already given me so many proofs.

Receive, my dear brother, the expression of my regret for the difficult task I am imposing upon you, and of my warmest gratitude for the repose of mind which I shall owe to your kindness.

PREVERE.

## XL.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

YOUR letter has reassured me, Charles, and has explained your irreverence up to a certain point. It is not on the master that it falls, but on the awkward servants. However, respect for the sex ought always to be observed; and, since among all these gentlemen a lady is to be found, I could have wished that your satire had been less severe and more courteous. Why feel angry with this lady for making inquiries into matters connected with washing and soap? Would you rather that M. Rapin had examined this question? For my part, I commend Madame Dacier; and, if I were to learn your Greek for the sake of making annotations and giving my opinion of the author, I should confine myself, as she has done, to domestic affairs, to those which can best be learned by

the practice of household occupations and in the shade of some obscure retreat.

I was ignorant moreover until now that in these domains of learning, ladies were ever to be met with. The apparition of one of our sex in the midst of these commentators, appears to me far more fabulous and unexpected than the appearance of Ulysses could possibly have been to the young washer-maidens. But who, then, is this Madame Dacier? To what age does she belong? Can it be to ours? Ought I to picture her to myself as young or old? Robed like a muse or habited like one of ourselves? Having learned Greek in consequence of being shipwrecked in Greece, followed by a long captivity; or else, as a matter of taste and to earn a living, or to set her head astray? Enlighten me on this point. I am so ignorant, that this appears to me like some phenomenon, like some great accident of nature, at which I am perfectly stupified.

As for the story of Nausicaa, I think with you that it is full of freshness and simplicity; and I am greatly indebted to you for having taken the trouble of making so elegant an analysis of it for me. But why are things which appear so simple, and conceived with so little effort, no longer produced in our own days? And why, when they are produced, are they no longer invested with the same charm? Is it to their antiquity that they are indebted for their attraction? Is it because the poet who draws Nausicaa, appears to be himself as simple and as youthful as the times which he describes? This is the idea which I am inclined to entertain, when I remark how, with so much more talent and skill, and having so many more models before them, those of our poets whom I have read fall short of that true spirit of poetry which makes itself felt even in your analysis. I one day heard M. Prevere, speaking of Homer, say, "He is the only poet superior to every other, and the father of the greater number." I did not understand his meaning at that time; but on reading your transports and your translation, I feel as if I could now better enter into his feeling. And thus it is, Charles, that, with the learned, we become learned also.

Why, then, are you so angry with Madame Dacier? Here am I following in her footsteps, and perhaps, without telling me so, you may be thinking *irreverent* things about me.

I should love to devote myself to study, Charles, and the only thing which prevents me from doing so is the fear of knowledge. Explain this as you can. When a thought a little more serious than usual presents itself to my mind, I tremble and draw back. A secret voice seems to whisper to me that this is no affair of mine; it seems to mock me and laugh at me *irreverently*. It is on this account that I confine myself to the labours of my needle, to hanging up the bunches of grapes to dry, to arranging the apples in the fruit-loft, and to directing the washing of the linen with at once more and less simplicity than Nausicaa the laundress; for if I do not go myself to the stream, I have not, on the other hand, a beautiful car drawn by mules to take me there. When I am queen of the earth, we must see about furnishing ourselves with such an equipage; without, however, inflicting any injury on our poor ass, with whose services you might have been contented in your royal progress, instead of disturbing the mares from their pastures.

The wines are barrelled, the cellars closed, and the evenings have become more agreeable again. While you are reading Homer, we, on our side, are reading *Le Messager Boiteux*; and, for the three last evenings, we have been at the history of an avalanche, which, as you see, travels slowly. But my father, like many others, wishes to understand everything fully, so that there is usually a prolonged discussion; without reckoning a banquet of chestnuts and new wine, which yesterday caused an interruption in our proceedings. It was my father who gave us this little surprise. M. Prevere made one of the party: he requested also that we would continue the story before him; he mingled in the conversation; and, little by little, he allowed himself to be beguiled into narrating to us the most interesting anecdotes in the world, adapted to the comprehension of every one, even of Redard, who can understand nothing that is not as clear

and visible as the sunshine on the fields. I work and listen, happy in my love for you, for M. Prevere, and for all the company, and thinking this scene worthy to be compared with those the description of which has so transported you, and without envying in the least Nausicaa, the princess of the Phæaciens, her companions, or any one whatsoever. But if all poets are not Homers, neither are all our evenings embellished by the recitals of M. Prevere.

But see how long I am detaining you. I do not expect any letters from you for the next few days: devote yourself solely to your occupations; and, believe me, the day on which I shall hear that you have succeeded, will repay me with usury for all the sacrifices I have made.

Your affectionate,

LOUISE.

P.S.—I forgot to tell you the great news of the village. The De la Cours are going to spend the winter in town. We have seen but little of them this summer, and I do not know whether they will even come to say farewell. But, whether they do or not, I can only wish them a pleasant journey.

## XII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*General.*

HERE I am a student, Louise; it is only since this morning. Make this known, I entreat you, to your father. I have not courage to do so. Your postscript has thrown me into such a state of agitation and anxiety.

These De la Cours!—I strove so to turn away my thoughts from them! I endeavoured to compel myself to forget that young man. I have put a strong restraint on myself for a length of time, before venturing to mention the subject before you. Forgive me, Louise, if to-day I suffer you to perceive my trouble. Consider that I am far from you; consider that you are all the world to me; and let not the feeling which distracts my heart,



and makes it tremble at the most distant thought of losing its only and dear possession, appear importunate in your eyes! Moreover, learn what has given birth to these alarms.

I received, a few days ago, a letter from your father, containing some lines which it made me sad to read. He urged me to acquire a virtuous character and an honourable reputation, to which he was *sacrificing* for you both *rank* and *wealth*. He made me feel—what I already felt only too bitterly—that I have nothing, that I am nothing; and he added these very words which I could not read without alarm:—“If I preferred riches to an honourable life, I know where to make one, not far from hence, as happy as an angel in heaven.” I wished to forget these words also, at least I was striving to do so, when this porter, whose conversation always serves to cloak a malignant curiosity, spoke to me of some reports which were current on the subject of M. Ernest, and of proposals made by him to M. Reybaz. In connection with this, he showed me a bulky letter written by M. Prevere to M. Dervey, which the messenger had just left in his lodge; and, lastly, this morning, your postscript informs me that the De la Cours, contrary to their usual custom, are coming to spend the winter in town. How am I to interpret these unusual movements? Have any recent circumstances induced this sudden resolution. Can any secret attempts have been made—unknown perhaps both to you, Louise, and M. Prevere—to dazzle M. Reybaz, already so little satisfied with me, and to shake his purpose? Did not you yourself tell me in one of your recent letters, that I might possibly endanger all the promises which he has made to me! Ah, Louise, relieve me I implore you from this anxiety! These shadows and uncertain lights seem horrible phantoms which surround me! One word, one sign from you will make them all vanish from my view!

It is M. De la Cour, Louise, who has asked for your hand! From this day forth his very name chills me with terror. I cannot persuade myself that a happiness which has been denied to him, can, by a miracle of Heaven, be

reserved for me! M. Ernest De la Cour! — Dare I say it to you—from this day forth I shall hate him! If I would be relieved from this agitation, I must turn my eyes away from him, from the place where he is, where he dwells in regret for your loss, or it may be perhaps in hope!! M. Ernest De la Cour—at the idea that after this first refusal he has attempted new proposals, I feel a sense of outrage, a transport of despair and fury boiling in my breast. Why do they come to town? But no, I am uttering senseless ravings. The very fact that he is withdrawing to a distance from you and from your father ought to make me rejoice. Here I shall see him and shall not fear him. Write to me, Louise, I implore you, without mystery, without concealment, that your lines may put an end to the state of torture in which I shall exist until I receive them!

CHARLES.

### XLIII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

REALLY, Charles, your last letter is a tissue of follies; you must be raving. I shall never write you another postscript again. Moreover, you reason after a strange fashion. You have made a rival of M. Ernest: so far I have nothing to say. When people imagine romances, I think it a very suitable step to introduce a rival on the stage to animate the scene and supply the narrative with adventures. But when this rival subsequently leaves the place and withdraws to a foreign shore, I am quite unable to comprehend your despair; the romance is spoiled; it no longer possesses either common sense or any resemblance to truth, and I perceive too plainly that the author is dreaming when he is inditing his pages.

I shall certainly reply to you without mystery or concealment, but you must not expect me to invest this affair with more importance than it deserves. I know absolutely nothing more than what you know yourself

equally well, and it appears to me that if M. Ernest had thought proper to make the proposal which you suppose, I am the person, one would think, to be consulted in the matter. I think, however, that you do injustice to M. Ernest's delicacy, injustice to my father's integrity, injustice, Charles, to me; since, even were these phantoms of your brain real demons, they could not have the slightest power either to trouble or alarm you, if you had confidence in my tenderness as you ought to have in my discernment.

But I will say still more; the departure of Madame De la Cour and her son appears to me a very desirable, if not a necessary arrangement. They now scarcely ever visit us, and they must naturally have felt some mortification at my father's refusal. In this position of affairs, I can imagine no project so natural for them to form and to execute, as this which appears to you so strange, so unheard of, and at the bare mention of which your imagination takes the field in such dark and stormy weather. Charles! your apprehensions make me smile and weep at the same time. I am touched by your alarms, and yet I cannot help smiling when I discover on what they are founded. Let every one then pursue his own way around you, let M. Champin receive letters in his lodge, let him even be curious, as they say all those of his profession are, and return again as quickly as you can to that peace of mind which it is your own pleasure to disturb.

Madame De la Cour came to-day, unaccompanied, to take her leave. M. Prevere was not at the parsonage, and it devolved upon me to receive her. Her health, she told me, required that she should spend some time near her physician, and she wished also that her son should see a little of the world. Afterwards we talked of the rain, the snow, of fruit-preserving, of the gardener, and the greenhouse, and, lastly, about a young kitten which she entrusted to my care during her absence. If, then, your porter had informed you that Madame De la Cour had paid a visit to the parsonage, without adding that it was to consult me respecting the education of a kitten, you

would not have failed to add this circumstance to all those other extraordinary circumstances which you have already discovered, and to read in it the secret of your destiny. You see now what it is, Charles, to have any connexion with phantoms. Break off your acquaintance with them quickly, I conjure you; chase away these angry suspicions and these feelings of animosity which you so unjustly cherish against M. Ernest.

In the midst of your preoccupation of mind, you pass very lightly over an event which has caused us here the warmest satisfaction—I mean your promotion to the position of a student. I announced this intelligence to my father, but I was sorry at not being able to accompany it with any details, when these details, I am certain, would have interested him, besides rejoicing me. Mr. Prevere, on his side, asked me all sorts of questions, which embarrassed me so much the more that I dared not give him your letter to read, nor relate its contents, which I frequently do. Another time, Charles, you will take into consideration this situation in which I dread to be placed, and you will remember that it is only just that a part at least of your cheerful and interesting communications should be such as can be communicated to those by whom I am surrounded. This would be an enjoyment to them whilst it would double my pleasure.

Your LOUISE.

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### XLIII.

CHAMPIN TO REYBAZ.

*Geneva.*

You have kept yourself buttoned up close, Reybaz, on the subject of the notable; and if in your dozen lines there is matter for conjecture, there is none wherefrom to extract anything certain. You were at perfect liberty to do so, just as a man in his own house is at liberty to slam the door in the face of an inmate who skulks about to play the eaves-dropper. Only you treat an honest-hearted ancient rather too much like an eaves-dropper—not that I am



going to be angry at it. People have their humours; I stroked the hair the wrong way, it seems; let us suppose that I said nothing about the matter. Meanwhile 'tis to no purpose that I refrain myself, as you advise me; tongues will wag none the more nor the less for that; and as for commanding me to silence them, I would rather you would enjoin me to stop the Rhone from flowing.

Make them hold their tongues, Reybaz? It was my wish to do so, perfectly agreeing with you that it is mischief that sets them a-wagging at such a rate, and knowing besides that the tongue is at once the worst member, and the best, as *Æsop* says: the best when it lies still, the worst when it is going—so I interpret the dictum. For what is the tongue but the trumpet of the heart, which in all the sons of Eve is crammed with slander, malice, high notions of self, and jealousy of others. And as in battle, while the men are falling, while the wounded are dying, while corpses bestrew the fields, a shrill trumpet calls to glory, and sends forth its lying flourishes, so the tongue, while that bad leaven is fermenting within, pours forth its gilded words, and circulates its lies! The tongue!—why it is sometimes the dart to wound, sometimes the rasp to wear away—always the mask to conceal. It is the seed, incessantly sown, of guile, of troubles, of misfortunes; whereby you see that if you distrust it, I distrusted it before you.

And it was precisely on this account, old fellow, that I asked you in my last to tell me privately how the matter stands in regard to these notables and your Louise, to the end that, flinging the truth at those gossips, as one throws to dogs the prey which they have got scent of, I might glut them, and then that, satiated with their regale, they might turn to some other quarter. When Eve had eaten the apple, she did not pluck a second; so these gossips, once satisfied, will hold their tongues. Not so by leaving this veil half drawn over the thing that whets their curiosity; they run round and round, but cannot raise it, they watch, they snuff, they scent, and, rather than know nothing, they invent. Already your daughter's story is going the rounds of the neighbourhood, according

to their version, when I had rather it had been yours. However, once for all, this is your affair, and you had every right to do as you pleased.

They say then that this notable is certainly M. Ernest De la Cour, more by token, that, crossed in love and vexed at your refusal, he has left the place and come to live with his mother in a house in the Cour-Saint-Pierre, where they landed the day before yesterday. I myself saw the baggage standing before the door, and a skipjack of a footman, who only got into the way and hindered those who were moving it. While I was there, this M. Ernest himself came out; and I was sorry on seeing his good looks, and all this fine furniture, that it was not your Louise who was to restore cheerfulness to this cavalier, and to loll upon those couches all covered with silk and gilding. 'Life is short, Reybaz, and this lower world a lottery. To make you thus refuse the grand prize, it must have been at bottom very ricketty and worm-eaten, or how could any one imagine you would prefer to wealth and condition, poverty and—— and what else? since in fact your future son-in-law cannot tell whence he springs, nor you either. After all, this also is your affair, and you had every right to do as you pleased.

Meanwhile, here is your future son dubbed student. Once among that crew, he will soon learn their ways; and if you or M. Prevere apply yourselves to give him regularity and steadiness, he will lose them in less time than it took him to gain them. Student or rioter, they are all the same. To do mischief is their recreation; to hoot passengers, to annoy tradesmen, to ridicule old folks—these are their everyday amusements: to pelt with snow-balls an infirm or gouty person who is creeping past their den, is their exploit and their joy; to break windows is their daily bread. He looks to me like a brisk fellow who will do his full share, and who, for a long time to come, will be much more of a rioter than a Levite of the Lord. For the present, however, he is quiet, because, being but a novice, he still believes it is only by working that one gets forward. But before two months are over,

he will be like all the rest of them, spending his time in idleness, brawling, and mischief. The other day, at their lesson in physics, they made an ass climb the stairs, some pulling him by the head, others shoving him at the tail, so that the donkey mounted aloft at last. When the professor saw this beast among his scholars, "'Tis only one more," said he; and, seating himself, he gave his lecture. It was well said, but in the mean time the milkwoman was seeking her ass in all directions, quite miserable, and in great danger of being beat or discharged if she did not find it in time.

For your guidance, he knows of the affair concerning this M. Ernest, Mr. endeavouring to pump him on that point, I found him shy, and much more disposed to learn something from me than to tell me anything himself. Only, I could see that the idea of having this fine gentleman for a rival is anything but agreeable to him, and that, for the rest, he is sensible that however little you may incline to his side, nobody could find fault with you, or even be surprised at it. And I would wager that he himself, at bottom, though he takes good care not to show it, is satisfied that, as a father, you have a right to do so. When, to try him, I said, "The report goes that Reybaz intends to give his daughter to M. Ernest," I could plainly perceive alarm in his countenance, rage in his eyes, and that, if he reckons upon anything, it is not on his right to be preferred to a gentleman of birth and fortune. At any rate, without allowing anything to escape him in the way of remark, "Possibly," he replied, and hurried to his chamber.

As for news, there is Jalabert, Samuel of that name, whom you knew once on a time, going to marry his son to Gambard's daughter, a sprightly lass, who will give him a pirn to wind. Spiteful people say that there is no time to lose. They add that a certain somebody was going to marry her, but it was discovered that he was in debt, and that it was the dowry he wanted to marry; so Father Gambard sent him a-grazing, and turned his eyes towards Jalabert, whom he had before rejected. Jalabert, without turning up his nose, accepted the offer, saying



that he was much obliged into the bargain. The wedding is to be on Monday.

On the other hand, here is my girl has been ogled by a sheepfaced admirer, to whom I shall give her by-and-by; although indeed there is no risk in making him wait, being at once a pedagogue, starched stiff with morality, and a godly fellow quite puffed up with catechism. For the rest, stupid as a block, but of the wood that lambs of husbands are made of. He has set up a school near here, where, by braying out his gibberish about geography and the four rules, he contrives to pick up a hundred louis per year; and, besides, is looking out for another house, not having room enough. In the evenings, he used to drop in on the strength of a cousin of mine who introduced him. It was then that he began to glower his eyes on my Catherine, as if they would start out of his head; until at last I said to him, "*Pardieu!* friend, translate these oglings for me—I don't like this secret game." The poor devil started with fright. "Nobody is going to eat you," I added, on seeing his frightened look; "but make your request, or leave us at peace." "I do make it, Monsieur Champin," he stammered out. "Well, I agree to—consider of it." And there the matter rested.

What still stops me is that my Catherine is a meek one, while what is wanted here is a Trojan, who would wear the breeches. Buckled to this milk-sop, and, pretty as she is, they would build me up an endless line, and find themselves lost amidst this heap of chickens to hatch; so that a hundred louis, which would do well enough for a couple of brats reared with crusts of bread, will be no great things for filling eight or ten squalling babies with the fat of the land, such as my girl, out of fondness for the cubs, will not fail to do, and as the other, with all his texts and passages, cannot gainsay. However, Reybaz, I think I shall make up the match, seeing that I shall be there to govern, and feeling besides that I mean to lend, rather than give, my daughter; insomuch that any son-in-law who should be disposed to stir her up to rebel against me would not suit me. It is certainly because I incline to this one, that, by allowing him to visit Catherine, I am



aiding and abetting in depriving myself of her; since, to let fruit ripen without looking after it, is consenting to its being eaten. They see one another, therefore, every day; she not refraining from billing and courting like any turtle-dove to my very beard, and he, not daring to coo the least in the world in my presence, for fear I should launch out upon him. But I dare say, when I have turned my back, the chap can find his voice; and it is my opinion that, in his school-room, when cock-a-hoop with thinking of her and fuddled with love, he must make wild work of his grammar and blunders in his additions. Nevertheless, he is not a man to wrong them of a minute's time on account of <sup>his</sup> courtship; and I might, without fear, set my watch by his coming, which is in the evening, ten minutes after six o'clock, allowing just time to dismiss his class and to walk hither.

It is a long time, ancient, since we had a chat together, and I owed you this confidence in order that, at any moment, you might learn without surprise that Cupid is busy with us too.

And now I must leave you, to open to some one who has been ringing for this hour past.

CHAMPIN, JEAN MARC.

#### XLIV.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

YOUR letter has arrived, Louise, and it has not only brought me peace, but overwhelmed me with joy. This, then, is the end and issue of that affair? You are sure that they are leaving you without any covert attempt, any secret hope, and as if for the purpose of showing that they think no more either of you or me? Heaven grant you may be right! Let these things only be true, and, after having been frantic with sorrow, I shall be frantic with happiness. Let them only forget you, and I shall be only too delighted to forget them! Let them never return to the parsonage, and I will love them tenderly!

You joke me, Louise, about these phantoms. No; I should not tremble before a dozen robbers fully armed, I should rush upon them, and, if it were to save you, I would overcome them single-handed in my fury. But these cruel visions, these shadows which glide through the surrounding gloom, and which I perceive without being able to seize them—ah! these make me shudder. If I am not guarded by the talisman of your words, they shake my inmost soul, they overwhelm me, they make me their prey. Even now it is an easier task for me to turn away my eyes from them, than to cease to look on them without terror.

And then, Louise, here is this porter, ~~his~~ friend of your father's, whose remarks, whose countenance, whose vicinity, keep me always in a sort of uneasiness. This man wears a sort of sinister appearance to me: he informs me of things which I had better have remained in ignorance of, he questions me in a treacherous fashion, and he watches me with an air of suspicion and malevolence. He is a sort of phantom of flesh and blood, which haunts my cell, and from whose clutches, did it depend upon myself, I should long ago have withdrawn. You say that all those of his profession are inquisitive; but they are not all, like him, penetrating, sarcastic, supple, and ill-natured. For my part, I am astonished that he can be a friend of M. Reybaz, who is so full of uprightness and integrity.

The De la Cours arrived on Wednesday. They have taken up their abode in a large house in the Cour-Saint-Pierre, beside the Temple. Stationed in a neighbouring street, I saw the cars with their luggage stop in the square. Although at some distance off, I recognised their servant Jacques, and I waited some time in the hope of perhaps seeing M. Ernest leave the house, and feeling more tranquil after I had seen him; but perceiving the porter hovering about the place I withdrew. Among the furniture I recognised the beautiful drawing-room couch with the canopy, around which in our childish games we have so often gambolled. Shall I confess it—the sight of this rich article of furniture aroused a painful feeling within me? I gazed with anguish at the passers-by gathered

around the cars. Their observations, which I was too far off to hear, seemed to be the expression of a comparison overwhelming for me, favourable, flattering, and powerful for M. de la Cour; and if I could have torn out the eyes of that porter, who stood apart, gazing attentively at the scene, I should have done so with delight. In the evening I returned to the same place: there were no longer either cars or passengers, and I was already beginning to feel much easier, when, on returning home, I found your letter.

I have read it ten times over. I carry it to the class with me. If I were to lose it, I should believe myself abandoned. ~~And~~ yet, dare I confess to you, Louise, that I do not enjoy entire security? I require, I think, that you should laugh still more at what you call my folly. I have the folly to fear those after-reflections which your father may make, those which may be suggested to him, those which people will not fail to express before him, when they know that he has refused his daughter to M. De la Cour in order to give her to Charles. I have the folly to be convinced that M. De la Cour, if he truly loves you, if he has ever had an instant's hope that you might be his, will never be able to forget you; that, after loving you, he can never love another, can never tear your image from his heart, can never cease, if not to cherish the hope of having you as his wife, at least to adore you in secret. And this feeling have I not a right to take umbrage at, I who am destitute of every advantage?—I who am solitary, without parent or relative, threatened on every side either by a contemptuous prejudice or an insulting pity?—I who am nothing but through M. Prevere, to whom you do not belong—nothing, but through you, who do not belong to yourself?

I say more than I wished to say, Louise, more than is fitting towards you or salutary for myself. But, on contemplating my miserable condition, I become the accomplice of those who disdain me: my pride abandons me, and I can no longer fancy by what miracle from Heaven I have in Louise a guardian angel; a good genius, and, still more, a friend and a betrothed bride. Then it is that

from my lonely condition my fear springs. Ah! how bitter is such overwhelming happiness at the moment when it seems thus vanishing from our grasp, and so little merited! But let me cast aside this gloom; let me rather read over again your dear lines, your gentle reproaches, your compassionate mockeries, so admirably calculated to restore me to peace, and to renew my courage.

You blame me, Louise, for passing so lightly over these November examinations. They are already too far past for me to return to them now. This first trial is trifling; and when, after having answered a few questions, I found that I was a student, I was a little disappointed to see what a trifling change had taken place within me, and how little pleasure I experienced. On the following day I commenced a new course of life, more laborious, but at the same time more interesting, than that which I hitherto led. Our classes are varied and numerous, and this mode of instruction is far more animated than that derived from books. After receiving four or five lessons, I carry with me sufficient to occupy my mind for the remainder of the day, to digest, to understand, to commit to memory; and I endeavour, as far as possible, to take an interest in the subject. I have been tolerably successful on some points; and what encourages me is, that, having been questioned two or three times, I have been fortunate enough to answer sufficiently well to receive from my professors testimonies of their approbation. This alone, Louise, is already sufficient to fill me with ardour; judge, then, if, when I think of your father and what he expects from me, and of my future hopes of happiness which are yours also, there can be any need of other stimulants to excite me to perseverance and ambition. No, Louise; I am intensely anxious for all that can elevate me, for all that can raise me in the opinion of the world, and prove to all that I am as capable as another of striking out a career for myself, of distinguishing myself, and acquiring general esteem. Only let your good father not be too impatient, let him not bear too hard on me with his mistrusts, but endure with patience those faults which I will endeavour to correct, and he shall see whether or not I



know how to appreciate and be grateful for his goodness; and if, after having excited his displeasure, I shall not become a son who will honour and cheer his old age!

CHARLES.

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#### XIV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I FEEL that I have very little power, Charles, to combat follies to which I am indebted for such sweet testimonies of your affection, and such dear assurances of your intentions. Your fears afflict me, I hate the unworthy manner in which you speak of yourself, and yet it is an infinite enjoyment for me to receive these free out-pourings of your heart.

You wish me to laugh at you again, but mockery is not to my taste; I do not acquit myself in it with much grace, and to-day I am, I know not why, disposed rather to tenderness than raillery. I will not, any more, discuss seriously the causes for your anxiety; that would only be to inspire you with the belief that in my eyes they have some shadow of foundation. I shall only tell you that you know nothing of my father if you think that any consideration on earth could induce him to bestow his daughter on a young man whom he did not esteem. Neither are you much better acquainted with the character of M. Ernest, if you suppose that this young man, inconstant, indolent, and born in the midst of luxury and opulence, would be capable of retaining a strong and enduring attachment for an obscure country girl, without any pretensions or attractions; and, lastly, you do injustice to this country girl, if you suppose that she could thus be disposed of without her own inclinations being consulted. Unless, therefore, you doubt Louise herself, of all the clouds which you have drawn together there remains not a single trace, and now, behold the firmament once more extends over us its serene and azure canopy. Leave this poor porter then in peace,

against whom you nourish so extraordinary a resentment; leave these by-passers, leave this couch, of which you have almost made a four-footed phantom, and take good care not to tear out anybody's eyes, even when every facility is offered for your so doing.

I thank you for the details which you have given me at the end of your letter. They have filled me with joy and ambition. It seems to me as if it were I myself who had received all these testimonies of approbation. I glory in them, and they encourage me. The reason is, Charles, that these successes secure that futurity of which you speak, and which is as dear to me as to you. It is for us two, it is for us four inmates of ~~the~~ parsonage that you are labouring; and far from being able to do without you, the common happiness of all is resting in your hands. With what hope, therefore, do I behold your generous ardour, your earnest ambition! How deeply I am touched by it, how highly honoured, and how entirely does it free me from all my anxieties. By these means, rest assured, you will rise in my father's esteem, you will conquer his favourable opinion, and gain his whole heart. And then what happiness! what pure felicity! Ah! Charles, you see how entirely I also open my heart before you. My fears are not of the same character as yours. They are centred neither in my father, whose honour and integrity I know, nor upon M. Ernest, who is almost a stranger to me, but upon you, upon you alone, lest your imprudence, your anxiety, some impulse of generous rashness, some accident arising from thoughtless impetuosity, may arouse the unfounded but sincere anxieties which my father feels on my account, and which he will continue to feel until you have actually entered on your proposed vocation. You see, then, why this zeal which animates you, this success which encourages you, are causes of the liveliest joy to my heart, the source from which I draw a feeling of real security for you, for me, for us all!

I received your letter yesterday while I had with me a little orphan whom I am attempting to teach to read. The poor child, who naturally finds the labour of spelling

out her words exceedingly wearisome, gazed at me with envy, as she saw me running over your letter with a glance of the eye. When I had finished my rapid perusal, she took the paper with the utmost simplicity to endeavour to do the same, imagining that the task must be easier upon a loose sheet of paper than in a large book; but she was soon undeceived. "It is M. Charles," said I to her, "who wrote that." "He is very clever!" "Do you love him?" "Oh, yes, indeed!" "Do you know where he is?" "He is in the town." "But where is the town?" "It is where they sell the butter every Wednesday and Saturday." "Have you ever been there?" "Oh, yes." "And what did you see there?" "I took care of the ass." "And what did you do?" "I came back again." "Nothing more?" "Oh! yes. On my way home I saw a pickaxe lying on the road. It belonged to Brachoz. I picked it up and put it on my ass. When we got to the fountain we both stopped to take a drink. Then everybody that passed said to me, 'Where are you carrying that pickaxe?' 'It belongs to Brachoz.' And then further on I met Father Duruz—'Where are you going with that pickaxe?' 'It belongs to Brachoz'—until at last when I reached the village it was dark night. Then Brachoz's mother was frightened when she saw me, and cried out, 'That is his pickaxe!' and everybody said, 'It is his pickaxe! he must have taken a drop!' and then I went to my straw and fell asleep."

There is our conversation word for word. I am very fond of conversing with this poor child. In listening to her I cannot but admire how she learns and remarks just what it behoves her to remark and to know. In the midst of this little circle of thoughts within her comprehension and suitable to her condition, her life passes without complainings, without covetings, without desires, without anxieties, without her comparing her lot with that of others; and I ask myself if it is not doing her an injury to enlarge her comprehension by teaching her to read, or to increase the number of her wants by giving her a pair of shoes. In the mean time I am very careful not to change

her ideas respecting the town, in which she has yet seen nothing but a market for butter, where the children take care of the asses, and, as they return, pick up pickaxes. The more I listen to the prattle of this poor little creature the more it seems to me that I discover that Providence has allotted her portion to her, as well as to all, with a wisdom which disconcerts and baffles ours, or at least mine. She is destitute, but she has no necessities. She possesses a natural fund of gaiety, she has her own little pleasures, and, above all, enjoys an immunity from sickness and anxiety, and when I see all this I become much more timid in my attempts to do her good, for fear of doing her harm. I imparted my scruples to M. Prevere. "What you remark, Louise," replied he, "is so true that the longer I live I find it the more difficult to do good with the conviction that this good is real. There is only one point on which I never have any doubt, and that is, to ward off the approach of sin either from families or individuals. All that you owe to this dear child is to confirm her in the virtues suitable to her condition; beyond that everything is dangerous. And yet it is hard," added he, "that we dare not do more!"

There is one piece of news in which you will feel a melancholy interest, Charles, and that is the state of the poor girl Piombet, who, as you know, was betrothed to Paul Redard. No later than the last time that you were at the parsonage she seemed full of health and vigour; I remember that she came to bid you good-bye. This poor girl, ever since the beginning of the winter, has been pale and ill, and without anybody being able exactly to tell the nature of her complaint, it is sufficiently serious to occasion the gravest anxiety. Her mother was afflicted with a weak chest. M. Prevere intends one of these days to bring her to the town for the purpose of consulting one of the most able physicians, if she does not get better in a short time. But now all is ice and snow, the pond is frozen to the very bottom, and we have great fears for the vines. And yet, Charles, even here, while almost every one is lamenting over their vines or their fruit-trees, while the children of the peasants, shut up in



the house, crowd around the fire for warmth, disappointed that they are not able to roam abroad as usual, my little orphan is as gay as ever. Her vines, dear little thing, will never occasion her the least anxiety, and the snow supplies her with amusement. In trotting to and fro, she makes the imprints of her *sabots* in it, then she counts the nail-marks, and finds a thousand other sources of entertainment of the same nature. Her bed-chamber is the stable, where the cold rarely enters. When they milk, she has a draught of the warm beverage; when they eat, she always finds a crust of bread. Belonging to no one, she belongs to every one; and each person employs her in a thousand little services which she performs to the best of her ability, without receiving any thanks and without expecting any. In this manner this poor little plant grows, thrives, and flourishes. The rain visits her, and the sun does not hide himself from her. In truth, I know not whether she ought to envy the fate of any one whatsoever around her, and, to say the truth, she never dreams of doing so. May the Almighty, who has himself appointed her little part in the great concern of life, preserve it to her! May He continue her in her contented activity, in her cheerful ignorance; and may I, her school-mistress, endeavour to teach her nothing which could interfere with them!

I went down to the village a day or two ago to visit the poor girl Piombet, and if the snow does not afford me the same resources in the way of amusement which it does to my dear little orphan, I must acknowledge that on the other hand I do not sympathize with those who are unable to discover in it any charm. I love dearly all the four seasons; an eternal spring would weary me. But this secluded and domestic life of winter pleases me peculiarly. The warm little cabins, scattered over the frozen fields, give me the impression of a peaceful contentment, of repose earned by labour and rendered happy by the exercise of forethought. I cannot look at the smoke which rises from these cottage roofs, nor see the haylofts loaded with the dry spoils of the summer, without a sentiment of the sweetest gratitude. I cannot listen

without pleasure to the lowing of the cows, so warmly sheltered in their subterranean abodes, nor to the bleating of the sheep, which are held in captivity until the spring returns to renew once more the verdure of the fields. When the sun shines out upon such a scene, everything glitters, all nature sparkles and rejoices. The fields with their carpet of the purest white, the trees glistening in the hoar-frost, the blue mountains, seen as through a silvery mist, form a spectacle of incomparable splendour. It is precisely this spectacle which I have before my eyes while I am writing these lines, and I assure you, in the presence of these beauties at once so majestic and so winning, I regret not summer and its smiling flowers. I reflect too, that it is the season of labour for the students of the city, and that, reversing the example of the ant which accumulates its stores for the winter, they treasure up for the summer seasons of vacation, leisure for excursions into the country, and visits to the parsonage. And on this account it is time that I should finish this idle gossip.

LOUISE.

## XLVI.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES. •

*The Parsonage.*

THE frost continuing, M. Prevere, who was to conduct poor Piombet to town, cannot set out; wherefore I write to you concerning a purchase which I reckoned on charging him with. The roads are buried in snow, and in many places the hedges quite covered, so that it is speedier to go across the country than attempt to follow the paths. To mend the matter, the *Bise* of the day before yesterday has swept the heights bare and filled the bottoms, so that fears are felt for the vines. The almanac foretold this severe weather; but what is to be done? One cannot put the fields under glass; and when it is the hand of God that dispenses frost and snow, man cannot fight against it. But let Brachoz look to it! For, in this severe weather, a glass too much is enough to throw you into a sleep from

which there is no waking. So they keep him at home; and for this fortnight past he has not been once to market, where he could not have a dealing to the amount of two florins, without spending eighteen sous on the head of it for refreshment.

This purchase is for a present that I intend to make Louise, namely, a warm, and at the same time a Sunday mantle; in order that in church—where, from my place I can see her shiver under her shawl, and hear her voice tremble in the singing—she may be better protected from the cold. For this purpose you must consult the ladies of the house where you live; without however misleading them respecting Louise's condition; whom the coarse cloak that Martha wears, would as ill become as the furred silks in which Madame de la Cour is wrapped. Three weeks ago I saw a lady from town, who came to hear M. Prevère, in a sort of accoutrement which comes up to my idea: it is a silk cloak, not gaudy, and lined with wadding, in the form of a Capuchin's robe, and having, like that, a hood, which sometimes falls over the shoulders and sometimes is drawn up over the head, with a clasp or ribbons which keep it together at the throat. I like its look and also its easy wideness. As for price, I would go, if needful, as high as six or seven new crowns, wishing to have something good and furnished-looking, not frail stuff that tears, or that scarcely covers the wearer. And don't forget to thank the ladies heartily, whose services in this matter will much oblige me.

I now come to your letter, although of old date, and containing certain lawyers' arguments, the turn of which I don't like. It is on the subject of your everlasting scribbling, wherein you want to persuade me that the more French you write, the more Greek you will learn. If I had answered you at the time, it is my opinion you would have thought my words harsh, not liking to see language abused. But I refrained till I should see by that examination of the 1st of November how your practice would turn out, in default of your reasoning, which is worth nothing. This examination having passed to your honour, and Louise assuring me that you are



encouraged by the favourable testimony of your professors, I shall not return to that subject; and, as for your letter-writing, so that business, and consequently your profession, do not suffer by it, I shall not concern myself about the matter.

I have more to say upon the other point—to wit, the money which you are earning, on the strength of which you build up castles in the air, which prove how little your spendthrift disposition is yet amended, and your judgment brought under the rule of prudence. From that louis, which is still solitary in your drawer, you jump at one leap to a certain income of 1,248 florins, and with that sum you immediately support a family! I might look over these joyous conceits of inexperience, which your age and the excitement of a first gain, excuse, if not justify. But here again, doubling the sum, which is a mere freak of fancy, you squander the whole in wedding festivities, forgetting that household establishment which was to be supported by it! Is not this spending your income before it comes in? And these things, which, in another, one might take for gaiety and frolics, are they not in you schemes, intentions, and a continuation as it were, in spite of your age, of the foolish intemperances of your childhood? Thus, this part of your letter was far from pleasing to me; and I here once more repeat my advice, so often given, and which I should be glad to leave henceforward in quiet, as having served its turn. I have no fear of your ever becoming a miser; yet even that disposition would give me less anxiety than the other. But I am in haste to see you become careful, economical, having an eye to the future, more ready to save than to squander, and recollecting that it is on the industry of our younger years that the comfort of our old age depends.

Louise continues well, thank God, amidst this severe weather. Jean Pierre, whom I sent up yesterday to the roof of the church to clear it of snow, let himself slide down the slope, and fell from a height of twenty-five feet, without getting any other harm than the fright, of which he was soon cured by a glass of wine. He lighted upon the snow as softly as on cotton. Whereupon I said to



him, "Luckily the mountain was not high, or you might have fared like those five men, who, as the almanac tells of, were so terribly mauled by the avalanche."

Herewith are eight pocket-handkerchiefs, which M. P'revere sends you to complete the dozen cut out of his web; and take care not to mislay them, as you are too apt to do.

REYBAZ.

## XLVII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

WHAT a treasure, Louise, is your letter! What happiness is contained for me in this morsel of paper! How well you know how to think, to feel, to speak, to fill my heart with enchantment and admiration! That dear little orphan! The poor girl P'ionbet, the snow, the cows, the sheep, and the smoke which steals upwards from the cottage chimney—all appear to me dear and lovely the moment that you speak of them; because you can speak of nothing without the charm of your gentle and discriminating good sense animating and inspiring every word. In listening to you, I am forced to confess that I neither know how to perceive nor feel; that I study but do not think; and babble but do not talk. And I too am an orphan! Ah! be my instructress, and let your delightful lessons be multiplied more and more! They charm me, they teach me that which I could never learn from books.

I shall think no more of M. Ernest, no more of this porter; away with phantoms! I will keep before my eyes nothing but that future which you tell me is as dear to you as to me—that happy time when I shall have conquered, as you assure me I shall, the confidence of your good father, and gained his heart, which has been so slow to love me. Ah! Louise, dread neither imprudences, discouragements, nor reverses; and if it is on me that your fears rest, chase them away for ever! When you speak to me, I feel within me strength, determination, wisdom!

Speak to me often, it is my only prayer, and then I can answer for myself.

Imagine to yourself, Louise, that when I feel within me the courage and ambition which your words kindle, I ask myself if it be possible for any one to accomplish anything really good without being in love; and when I see any of my companions incited by ambition to make more energetic efforts than the rest, I immediately fancy that he has already given his heart to some beloved one.

And yet in truth I see but few who appear to stand in this position. The greater part pursue their own little ways, without showing the least spark of the fire of which I speak. They attend the different classes, between the lessons they munch cakes; after the lessons they show themselves upon the promenades; in the evenings, with their hair curled and elegantly dressed, they dance, or take tea, or chat, or keep silent—all with the same air and the same indifference. One would imagine they were going through a series of forms, to which they submit as a matter of course. After several years spent in this manner, they find themselves, some lawyers, others ministers, and others again simple gentlemen. Then they marry, or allow themselves to be married, and all is ended. They act in conformity with the usages of the position in which they are placed, and, if it is tolerably comfortable, they settle tranquilly down in it.

I sometimes hear this subject discussed, but in very different manners. There is a class of people who find this state of things everything that could be wished. They augur from it peace, happiness, and morality. They call these people a sober and steady generation. Others deplore this apathy, which leads to general mediocrity, and which forms neither distinguished characters nor illustrious citizens—two elements which, according to them, are essential to the prosperity and existence of our little country. They say that many, without doubt, may find happiness in such a life; but that it is a selfish happiness, separated from the happiness of others, having its root in material enjoyments and not in generous and manly affections. They say that this vaunted peace is hollow,

that it is but the sleep of the nobler passions, without which it is not worth while either to entertain a feeling of just pride, or to cherish a love of country, scarcely even to have one. And I am always of the opinion of this latter class, more especially when they are the last speakers.

But these young men—if you only knew how they speak of the young ladies! Exactly in the same manner that they speak of anything else, Louise; just as they would respecting a pretty object, an elegant article, or a well-dressed doll. “She looked very well last night, or the other day. She dances nicely or badly, as it may be, I like the style of this one; I prefer the other. I did not dance, they were all too ugly. I did not talk, it was too fatiguing.” Such is the amount of good manners and good feeling, neither more nor less; such the chivalry which is to be found amongst us, save in some few, and these much the smaller number. Is not this either very senseless or very singular?

I confess that, when I see all this, I sometimes fancy that the fault lies in the young ladies themselves, who are contented with too little. If, to win their affections, it were necessary to have obtained some degree of distinction, would not such a motive arouse in these young men a noble and generous rivalry—a desire to please at any expense of pains and labour—a longing desire to distinguish themselves—which would lead them to a very different mode of thinking and acting. Instead of this, such as they are they are courted and flattered; their conversation is listened to as amusing; their preference is considered an honour. Well, they fancy themselves very delightful, and I scarcely see how they can think otherwise. However, I believe I am abusing them through jealousy, for it is quite true that I do not shine beside them. In the society which I frequent they possess every advantage over me, and I cannot deny that my self-love is sometimes made to suffer. I ask myself why I remain in my corner while they flutter through the saloon; and, rather than acknowledge the cause to lie in my own awkwardness or my own insignificance, I prefer to pronounce the young ladies silly and the gentlemen empty.



Do not suppose, however, that in my corner I am humble and envious! I may have an awkward air, it is true, but under that air is concealed pride and triumph; and, instead of envy, I assure you I feel nothing but pity and compassion for all who are not myself! For I think of you, Louise, and, comparing you with all these young girls that I see—comparing my own lot with that of these young men—I tremble with joy in my corner; and whoever should place my blushes to the account of modesty would be greatly deceived.

Amongst these young men I know some who possess great merit, and whose friendship would be as flattering to me as it would be delightful. And it seems to me as if they looked upon me with similar feelings, for they are just those very few who appear to think least of my inferiority in so many ways to themselves. But I feel too acutely the distance which separates me from them, and I reply to all their advances with a reserve which they can scarcely fail to take for coldness. Ah! how they are mistaken, and how much would they be surprised if they could read my heart! No, nothing can be so amiable as the union of kindness and merit; and, looking at the world, I begin to think that true merit alone leads to true worth. Wherever such a union is not found, vanity soon stifles the best impulses; benevolence is banished by a host of little pettinesses; raillery takes the place of wit; and the desire of distinction is turned into an empty foppery, inflated by pride and jealousy. Many of the young men whom I see are of this class. Familiar with me in the classes of the academy, they no longer know me when we meet in the drawing-room; and I often perceive that the country lad and his history supply them with agreeable subjects of conversation when they are endeavouring to entertain the ladies.

It is through the kindness of M. Dervey and these amiable young men of whom I have spoken above, that I have been introduced a good deal into society. The circles here are arranged according to a fixed scale of rank, of class, and coterie, and are never mingled together. But the very circumstance which ought to exclude me from



all is just that which causes me to be tolerated. Unknown and unconnected as I am, people cannot assign me any fixed rank; so that, sharing in this respect the privileges of strangers, I find myself invited a little everywhere. These coteries are in the highest degree exclusive and jealous of each other; but that which amuses me is, that, while all, from the highest to the lowest, accuse the coteries above them of pride and aristocratic feelings, not one of them will open their ranks to the coteries that are beneath them.

I have told you nothing yet of all that I wished to say, and here is the messenger, who refuses to wait any longer. This woman always comes too late and departs too soon!

CHARLES.

## XLVIII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

SINCE I am not to write you any more postscripts, I shall begin my letter where I ought to finish it. Your expressions of affection are sweet and welcome to me, Charles, and I enjoy them without asking myself whether I deserve that you should show me such warmth and tenderness; but these eulogiums which you mingle with them, make me feel both ashamed and embarrassed. Even if I merited them I should feel so; much more then do those which you have written to me make me blush, and I am almost ready to ask myself what I can have done to be treated thus like a distinguished person, and one who wishes to be thought so. This is my complaint against you. Pray grant my request and do not repeat it. Were I not convinced that I can never become an object of observation, and still less of admiration, you would frighten me terribly. I should scarcely have the courage to write to you, or, if I did, it would be without freedom or openness.

As for the rest, I shall not undertake the task of refuting your chivalrous theory respecting the motives for a generous ambition. I could suggest many others,

such as a disinterested love of virtue, in religious minds; the desire of glory; the wish to support a household in comfort; or, to descend still lower, the desire to avoid dying of hunger. But I am too much gratified with this idea of a young man offering his labours, his acquirements, his efforts, and, above all, his success, as a homage to the lady of his affections, not to be convinced with you that of all motives, this is, if not the most elevated, at least the most to my taste. I know nothing in fact so flattering to our sex, as the belief that they are in some, although it may be in an indirect way, contributing to that success which confers honour on yours. But pray be a little indulgent to these gentlemen who eat cakes in the interval between their classes, while they are waiting for their diplomas. What prevents you from looking on them in the light of unfortunate individuals who console themselves in the best way they can for not having as yet met wit to whom they would wish to chain themselves for life—chevaliers not yet provided for, and whose consequent love has not deprived of their appetites.

As for the young ladies, whom you also treat severely, how can you expect from them that they should be able to distinguish merit, and, after having distinguished it, to encourage it also, if, as I suppose, they merely meet these young men at balls or in promenades? Merit, Charles, in a young man, no doubt flatters and seduces our imagination, but it is because we see it appreciated by others, not because we are able to judge of it ourselves. Besides, be just, and consider how many things are of greater value in our eyes than merit, that is to say, than great acquirements or fine compositions, or a talent for public business; viz. grace of manners, amiability of character, sympathy of ideas, delicacy, reserve—what shall I say?—courage, actions stamped with nobleness or delicacy. All men of talent do not possess these advantages, and without them what is the highest merit to a young girl but tempting fruit upon a beautiful tree, hanging from too lofty a bough for her to be able to reach? And are not they the wisest, perhaps, who do not raise their eyes above their own level, and are content with securing what is

within their reach? But I cannot help admiring how I, who know nothing of that world in which you live, should yet venture into its arena to contradict you.

I am better acquainted with the ladies and gentlemen of our village; and, in truth, however little chivalrous may be their conversation and manners, I do not know whether, taking them altogether, their rustic gallantry does not cover a higher degree of sentiment than that cold and calculating gallantry which you have described in mine. My father, in a thousand respects, belongs to the village. If he is superior to the country peasants, it is through the energy of his character, and not from his tastes, his habits, or his condition. Well, Charles, I never hear him speak of his Theresa, my mother, who was nothing but a simple peasant girl of Dardagny, of the way in which their acquaintance commenced, and their attachment sprung up, without being moved by these rarely recurring conversations to emotions at once of tenderness and respect. Recently again, *à propos* of our too frequent communications, as he thought, he was over the history of the visits which they paid every month, on Sundays, and how their tenderness increased, although, as he says, it was sober in its manifestation. "When we were together, we understood each other by our looks: when absent we were still united in thought. We both of us carried with us, she to her domestic occupations, I to my labour in the fields, the food of remembrance, and the happy anticipation of soon meeting again." Can you imagine, Charles, a more true and deep-seated feeling, notwithstanding its austerity, than that which these words give you the idea of? Would it be easy, think you, to imagine declarations, gallant and passionate expressions, which would contain more of poetic and delicate affection than these thoughts during absence, and these modest and gentle testimonies of affection on meeting? They, in truth, were two chosen beings, formed for each other; but still even the betrothed couples of our village—when they love each other, and when it is not from motives of interest that they marry—recall these charming traits, and I am persuaded that their rusticity excludes neither

the emotions nor the delicacy of a sentiment which gentlemen and romances have so exclusively appropriated to themselves. That poor girl, Piombet! will she ever recover these joys of the heart? Do you remember her last spring, on Sundays, how, dressed in her gayest apparel, and her hair neatly arranged, and still more adorned by her youth and freshness, and her manner at the same time so timid and so open—she shone amidst the village girls? Do you remember, too, how after the service she and Paul Redard used to walk together hand in hand, and display their simple tenderness before the eyes of all around? Now she is pale and feeble, and she weeps when they speak to her of the spring which is approaching.

I love without knowing them, Charles, these young men whom you mention, who meet you with kindness, and to whose advances I so earnestly wish that you would compel yourself to respond with cordiality. How true it is, as you say, that real talent leads to real goodness of heart; and that vanity, if it does not degrade, at least corrupts the feelings, since it tends to stifle benevolence. Be assured that these opinions are so well founded in reason, that you will be more likely to find faithful friends among those young men of real merit, even although of lofty condition, than among vain and *mediocre* young men, although moving in our own rank of life. This is M. Prevere's opinion, to whom I read your reflections on this subject, and who agrees in their justness. To say the truth, I expected this; for it is the lessons you have received from him, and the example which he has set before you, which doubtless contributed to suggest them to your mind.

Here is New Year's Day, Charles, approaching very near us. You know that I do not like to wait for its arrival to make my little presents. You will find, therefore, your new-year's gift herewith enclosed; it is a purse with two tassels which I made for you as soon as the word reached me that you were earning so much money. The one end is for gold, the other for silver. I fancy that for some time at least this purse will be large enough to contain



your fortune; but I have sent you, over and above, a little coffer which I have despoiled myself of in your favour, and which may perhaps at some future period answer the purpose of a strong box. In the mean time, if you should happen not to have burned my letters as you receive them, I express a wish that you should place them in the aforesaid coffer, taking care at the same time to carry the key about your person—of course after locking the box. In this way I shall be relieved from certain apprehensions which sometimes cross my mind respecting these letters. I imagine it possible that after you have read them, you put them in your pocket, and that sometimes perhaps you omit that precaution, so that they may fall into other hands, and be read by other eyes, than they were intended for. And speaking of this, I must confess that I have never felt quite certain that, in the confusion attendant on your shipwreck, some paper may not by mischance have floated towards the shore. If so, Heaven grant that it may have fallen into the hands of some orphan as illiterate as my dear little pupil!

Your affectionate

LOUISE.

## XLIX.

### THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

*The Parsonage.*

TODAY, when putting in order the year's papers, I found your last, and take advantage of my ink not being frozen to answer it. I am of opinion the poor people of the town must have suffered cruelly from this cold weather, being shut up in their closets by these northerly blasts. Here they have always chips and brushwood to burn, without reckoning that it is the poorest who have thatch overhead. Now thatch beside tiles is like wool beside linen. The poor and needy of the country, nigher as they are to the hand of God, are rich compared with the indigent of the town.

To come to your letter. I see that the idle gossips of your street still continue to talk respecting my Louise. What can I do to help it? And since the tongue, according to your saying, is the best thing in the world when it is silent, and the worst when it is wagging, is it not much better for me to hold mine? Repeating once more, however, that he to whom I have engaged my Louise is he who shall have her. After that, if your gossips please to invent a story and you please to listen to it, I may be vexed about it, but I cannot help it.

Your portrait of the tongue, Champin, in which you allow your pen to take such high-sounding flights, I think true in every point, inasmuch as it is drawn from these gossips whose company you frequent. For it is of these that you can say truly that they rasp; that they blow the horn; that they sow poisonous seed; that, saving the hours when they are sunk in sleep, they are serpents which dart without ceasing, and at random—sometimes against rocks and brambles which they can harm not, sometimes against the tender flesh, which they benumb and poison. I do not deny that it is malice, self-love, envy, and the worst dregs of the heart of man, which furnish the venomous liquor for their sting; but I do deny that for such tattlers there is any prey which can satisfy them; and, even so, it were a cruel remedy, in order to save the lamb, to cast it to the wolves which howl around the sheepfold.

But, Champin, where your portrait limps is that it shows only one side of the matter; and you are like the painter who, having drawn a negro, cried out to the by-standers, "See how the men of this earth are fashioned!" For me, I hold to the saying, and I esteem the tongue the best thing also—adding, "if the fear of God restrain it and the love of our Saviour direct it." Tongues? I know some simple and harmless as the tongues of lambs. I know sober tongues, which abstain, prudent tongues which avoid the evil, discreet tongues which save from harm. Tongues? I hear charitable ones whose every word is a seed of consolation and benefit, whose anger is to be feared only by the wicked. And, to follow that figure of speech to which you rise

aloft, just as in battle, whilst the lying trumpets call the young men to death, there are priests who save the souls of the dying, surgeons who raise up and who heal the wounded, women of the army who carry about their flasks of *eau-de-vie* and bestow their care on those who need it, so, whilst the tongue of the wicked gives out sounds of lying and vanity, the words of the just spread around beneficent succour and healing remedies. Whereby you perceive in your turn that I share in your distrust; but before we are of one mind on this head, you must guard yourself from straying, as you do now, from the old saying of *Æsop*. Go to, there are others wiser and better than the dumb.

Instead, Champin, of seeking to know what matters neither to you nor to any one whatever, and not even to me, whom no notable has either flattered or overpersuaded, I would much rather you would stop the young lad on the downward road of evil, if either his natural disposition or those vagabonds you speak of, should lead him to tread it. At the present time, I have no reason to be severe upon him, and I trust that, seeing the nothingness from which he has sprung, this will be a powerful motive and a strong guiding rein to keep in the straight and sober path, which will give confidence to all who know him; in place of giving way to pride and self-content, which the stain of his birth affords no ground for whatsoever. If so be that he attain to the vocation whereto he is called, without hinderance, that one which he has made choice of will redeem him from shame; for to be lowly and humble is no stumbling-block to being chosen a Levite of the Lord. It is in this harbour, therefore, that I await his casting anchor, as in a place of meeting agreed upon beforehand.

I learn with pleasure, Champin, what you acquaint me with concerning your girl, esteeming you much happier at it than you are willing to let appear. For, notwithstanding all your mockery, I foresee in your future son-in-law a husband worthy of your Catherine, of whom I think well, and am truly desirous that she be happy. I see in this young man an honest lad; in the backwardness which you

jest at, the reserve which is fitting for one who pays his court after an honest fashion; and in his regular behaviour a surety that he will be steady and industrious, at once economical and desirous of rising in the world. And where there are honesty, industry, and affection, what need is there that one should lead the other? And still less, that it should be the woman, whom God has not fitted for so doing, having made her weak and with breasts to give nourishment to her little ones. Therefore, Champin, join this upright man to your daughter, and in place of mocking, as your gay humour leads you, bless Heaven who permits you, for your child, a choice rich in hope and in security, and does not burden you with the heavy cross it has laid on my shoulders, in calling me to supply a family and a home to this lad whom it has not given me.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

L.

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

*Geneva.*

I FORWARD to you to-day, Monsieur Reybaz, the cloak which you commissioned me to purchase for Louise, and in the choice of which I have been guided by the opinion of the Demoiselles Dervev, after having made them thoroughly aware of your wishes. They immediately said that the capuchin mantle which you had proposed would not be suitable; and that, to avoid rendering herself remarkable, Louise must follow the fashions to which they themselves conform. I agreed with them in this opinion, and you see the result. The only thing, Monsieur Reybaz, is, that we were obliged to exceed by a couple of crowns the price which you had fixed; but I suppose that you will not think this amiss, since, otherwise, you would have had one of very inferior workmanship. I remember to have heard you often say, "A good article



is dear but once," and I anticipated your wishes. Besides time pressed.

I entreat your pardon, Monsieur Reybaz, for those lawyer-like arguments which have displeased you. They were empty and worthless, and I recognise this, now that so much more occupied, I see myself obliged to follow the very rule against which I rebelled. But do not suppose, that, worthless as they were, I knowingly attempted to blind you. I know not how it was that I persuaded myself firmly that in writing more frequently I should be more free from preoccupation of mind. As for the other accusation, Monsieur Reybaz, which you have made against me, of wasting money as soon as earned, I can assure you that you are mistaken. What I said was much more in jest than sober earnest; another time I will strive to render my pleasantries more *à propos*. And to show you that I mean to hoard as much as possible, I have, in making a Christmas offering to Louise, followed the examples of our peasants, who convert their wedding presents into a massive necklace of gold, which is stored past as a treasure in the household, as a provision against old age or a time of need. I have therefore invested all my earnings in a gold chain which I have deposited in the secret drawer of a little workbox which accompanies the cloak, and which I beg you to present to Louise, from me, at the same time.

Since I wrote to you, Monsieur Reybaz, a part of my jesting has been nevertheless realized. I now give four lessons each day, and for the last which I have undertaken I am paid so much the lesson, that is to say, a quarter of a crown per hour! It is in mathematics, which I take far more pleasure in teaching than I did in learning it myself. I might have still more tuitions if I liked, but, if I wish to advance on my own account, I must limit myself to those I already have.

For the first time in my life, I am going to spend New Year's Day away from the parsonage. To me this is a cruel privation. I should have had so much to tell you, so many good wishes to offer, so many promises to make to you all, my dear benefactors! My heart overflows

with the desire of obtaining your approbation—yours, above all, Monsieur Reybaz. How I long, in a single hour, to overleap the next four years, so impatient am I to give you a proof of my sincerity! Receive along with the most ardent wishes for your happiness, the expression of the boundless affection and deference with which I am, Monsieur Reybaz, your respectful and ever grateful

CHARLES.

## LI.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

HERE is New-Year's Day past, Louise. The most blessed year of my life has closed—the dawn of that sun which will brighten all my future destiny! What vows have I formed; what emotions of gratitude have stirred, have filled, have melted my heart! How severely have I felt my banishment from you! Now that this day is gone, I feel, in beginning the New-Year, as if, after having reached the summit of a hill, I was descending on the opposite side, and approaching the valley where my travels and my exile are to end.

Had I even been able to pause upon this eminence, and sit in solitude down to contemplate those heights and that route which I have trod, and the valleys which I was approaching; to enjoy the calm and solemn feelings called up by such festivals, when the heart, comparing a sorrowful and miserable past with a present full of felicity, is overwhelmed with joy, and expands with transports of delight! But no: the New-Year's Day of towns is a miserable day. The people waste it in the bustle of visits, in fatiguing compliments, and in laborious idleness. From eleven o'clock in the morning until night, I employed my whole time in complying with the routine which custom has established, and in fulfilling its conventional duties. Madame Dervev was my instructress, and I passively submitted to her guidance. In obedience to her orders I have therefore visited a score of people

who could have done very well without me, while I could have done still better without them; and with a good number I left my card. What do you think of that, Louise? These are people who have conversed with me, or who have invited me to their houses. I am grateful to them for doing so, and I would willingly shake them by the hand or salute them on both cheeks—but no such thing! I place a little bit of a card in the hands of their servants, with my name written on it, and, behold, I am acquitted of all obligation. Is not this capital? or rather is it not monstrously ridiculous? But no: it is the fashion, therefore it must be both sensible and natural, and what would appear monstrous would be not to conform to it. Ah, this fashion! When I am king of the earth I will send the stupid wretch to the right about.

I paid a visit to M. Dumont's. He himself obliged me to enter, when I would far more willingly have passed on; for he intimidates me extremely. As I was hurrying away, after leaving my card, I heard some one running after me. It was the servant who had rushed in pursuit of me. The provoking fellow overtook me and begged me to return; his master wished to see me. Behold me then introduced and compelled to pay my compliments. "I wish, in the first place," said M. Dumont gaily to me, "to know how you are getting on with your studies; and, in the second, to invite you to dinner with me on Tuesday next." I endeavoured to excuse myself. "You may name your own time, but you must come. I shall have great pleasure in introducing you to a few friends whom you will find very agreeable and profitable acquaintances." The bare idea of this meeting brought the colour into my cheeks. "You are afraid," said he, on perceiving my embarrassment; "it is time, my dear boy, that you should overcome this childishness, and not shut yourself up, in the way you do, from the society of men whose connexion and support might prove extremely useful to you. And for fear of whom? Of my friend Bellot? I wish you may meet with a great many monsters of the same sort in your path." After this we talked about my studies, and he said a great many

encouraging things to me, one of them, however, that would not go down with your father. It was when I mentioned to him the lessons which I am giving:—"Bad! bad!" said he. "Ah! that is what ruins them all! It is necessary to work hard in the first place, my friend, but when you have finished your studies, you should do nothing else for some time but mix with society, take the air, lounge, gaze about you; because it is only in this way that people can digest what they learn, that they can observe, or that they can bring their learning to bear on the common concerns of life. And how many lessons do you give?" "Four each day." "Detestable! detestable!" "But—" "But you will stupify yourself into an ass—that is all!" "It is absolutely necessary—" "What?"—"to gain a livelihood." "Not at all! That is the absurdity of the matter. In that case, leave your studies and turn schoolmaster. A young man who looks a little high, requires not only time for study but leisure for thought. Let them manage to live as they best can afterwards. Besides, you are not in any necessity yet; and if you were—" He did not finish his sentence, but I comprehended his meaning; and such was the friendly confidence with which he spoke, that, instead of experiencing a feeling of humiliation, I took his hand and pressed it with heartfelt affection.

I left the house with a very disturbed mind, for this advice accords but ill with your father's. For my own part, I should like this method extremely; and if it required nothing but to take the air, and ramble through the fields in order to acquire what I want in knowledge and in talents, good Heavens! I would touch the stars, and become distinguished in a twinkling! But I dare not. Your father could never comprehend this sort of labour; without reckoning that I should receive no payment for it. I dare not, and I regret it deeply, because at bottom what M. Dumont said is true. With books alone one runs the risk of becoming stupid—stupid as Suidas, empty as Madame Dacier. You swallow, swallow—but you never digest. You only bind science to memory. You become a learned ass, instead of remaining simply an



ass like other asses, faithful to nature, and consequently honourable, natural, modest, pleasant to see and pleasant to live with. What a pity it is, Louise, that my duty in this matter obliges me to be guided by the opinions of your father!

Madame Dervcy obliged me also to pay a visit to the inmates of the house: an old worm-eaten magistrate, whose domicile is on the third floor; and two old methodist ladies, the mistresses of the little cur I mentioned, whom they stuff with sweetmeats and liqueurs. These are very excellent persons, except that they are always singing psalms, and are constantly insinuating all sorts of bitter things against the religion of those who do not frequent their own church. While I was there, a young gentleman was introduced who called them "*my sister*," and whom they called "*my brother*;" and with whom they commenced a conversation in a mystical language, thickly strewn with texts of Scripture, and which served them as a medium for saying all sorts of evil things against the present times, the wickedness of the world, the corruptions of society, and its deceitful joys mingled with so much misery. It was enough to make one expire with weariness; and all this, Louise, was said before a handsome tray loaded with sweetmeats, crystal goblets, and fine *liqueurs*; in the most elegant drawing-room, seated around the best fire, and reclining on the softest cushions, I ever saw in my life. There was luxury in Madame De la Cour's abode, but it is a hundred leagues behind the exquisite comfort in which these two good ladies live, who are so disgusted with the world and its false joys. When I was taking my leave one of them put into my hands a bundle of pamphlets, inviting me to renew my visits from time to time. They are little religious tracts, in which I can find nothing but the dogmas with which I am already acquainted, but accompanied by dismal menaces and gloomy warnings; or else histories of converted carpenters, of drunkards awakened by grace, and of a multitude of honest people, fathers of families, or young workwomen, all of them in a state of canonization, and all, of course, belonging to the sect.

But I mentioned that I did not begin my round of visits until eleven o'clock. Previously to that I had been present at a very different and most agreeable scene in the midst of the Dervey family. About eight o'clock we all met in the saloon, where there were packages of presents for everybody, and for me also, to such an extent that I found myself overwhelmed on all sides. Every one as they entered, offered, half laughingly half touched with a softer emotion, their good wishes to each other, with deep and heartfelt affection; and there was apparent in every member of this amiable family so lively a feeling of happiness at thus finding themselves all in the enjoyment of life and health, all united, all exchanging marks of tender regard, that it was really the most delightful fête you can imagine. Madame Dervey had abdicated her seat of empire that she might be everything to every person. M. Dervey was all gaiety and gratitude. The two sisters went from the one to the other of their parents, loading them with caresses; while, for my part, Louise, I looked on in silence, deeply touched by the kindness with which they had thus associated me with their family joys. Breakfast followed, full of cheerfulness, animation, affection, and lively conversation; and then the door was opened to visits, to cards of compliments, and the usual comedy commenced.

And you, Louise, will you tell me how you passed this day? Ah! how often I thought of past New-Year's Days, of the peaceful calm of the parsonage, of that tranquillity whose charm would, on this anniversary, have been so tender; of the embrace which M. Prevere would have given me—that embrace at once so solemn, so tender, so compassionate!—that embrace which was my safeguard and protection, which concealed the loneliness of my condition from my own eyes, making me feel that I was surrounded by all that protection, indulgence, and love which children receive from their parents! When shall I prove myself worthy of being the chosen child of so beloved a protector!

I have deposited my fortune in this purse, worked by your hands, and which shall never leave me more. And that coffer that I have so often coveted! Your letters are

all laid past in it; to what more delightful use could I have applied it? I say *all*, Louise, and I think I have some right to be offended at your fear lest I should leave them scattered about my chamber, or even lose them in my shipwreck. Learn that I keep an accurate account of their number; and that a week seldom passes that I do not read every one of them over again, not without remarking how thinly they are scattered over the dates of the almanac. But now we have a new year opening before us; and, among the hopes that I have formed, is that of seeing my coffer rapidly filled.

CHARLES.

## LII.

### CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

WHEN you talk about the poor people of the town, Reybaz—I mean those who are frozen to the very marrow of their bones—I recommend myself to be placed on the list. This lodge is the cavern of Eolus. To no purpose do I ruin myself in wood; my chimney puffs out more *bise* than warmth. And then, a perfect peal kept up by goers and comers: I wish them all at the devil, but that does not serve to warm me. There is nobody but our bashful wooer who is always hot; he scarcely ever looks at the fire. While I am trying to toast my poor legs a little at it, the chap keeps close by the window near Catherine, who is not cold any more than himself. Well, every dog has his day; in my time I did not wear flannel; and, if I suffered, it was not from chilblains. Wood is so dear that it would be cheaper to burn one's chairs, if they were not absolutely wanted for sitting upon. At the time of the Maximum the shopkeepers were not so rich, but the poor did not perish for want of a fagot; like two who were found frozen to death in their cabins in the Rue du Temple, without the government taking any notice of it.

I have read your epistle, in which you steal my flourishes to season them with your own sauce. If I am merry, that is not your temper, Reybaz; you would willingly make a



grave answer to the chirping of a sparrow. Did you wish to teach me that there are two faces to everything—God and Satan, good and evil, white and black, man and woman, day and night? I suspected as much, old boy, before your sermon; which only proves that you see good company while I frequent low. But I was born in it, and I shall die in it. Asses gain nothing by rubbing skirts with palfreys—at best a few kicks. For all that, however, there was a moment when the world was very near turning topsy-turvy, and giving the lowest a hoist to the top of the tree. That time may come again, but I shall not be here to see it; and meanwhile I shall stay in my den, where, but for the gossips, I should long ago have died of the blue-devils.

And then these gossips, Reybaz, though their tongues are a little bit sharp or so, are not bad sort of women, nevertheless. There is Jaquemay, a cunning gipsy, capital at picking up a bit of news, and one who would smell an onion in the middle of a haycock; but withal a good creature, works like a horse, and, by her washing, earns bread for five children, to say nothing of her idiot of a husband, who is oftener thirsty than hungry. There is Servet, a Trojan of the good old times, with a bold eye, the speech of a queen, and a look to match; withal obliging to her friends, and a regular grenadier whenever it is necessary to mount the breach: we old folk call her *the drum-major*; she has the moustache of one. Then there is Chapelon with a store of merry tales, a hardy, laughing wench, rather a roguish eye, but not more so than many a scented lady who keeps her game more closely to herself. There is Givaudan, the laundress, Grillon the grocer, Dutilleul, Franchet, all honest folk, and the flower of the quarter. Almost every one of them you knew in your young days; and if they cackled less then, it was because it is the nature of youth to suffice for itself, as it is that of old age to die of the blue-devils if it cannot prate, or, at least, fall dotting.

As for those lambs'-tongues you speak of, I know some of them too, and of both sexes. The good God bless them, and preserve me from the honeyed gall which is on



the tip of their sting. I know some who mount the pulpit, and I know others who wear petticoats. I know some who launch out fiercely against sinners, without for all that quarrelling with the sin; and I know those who, though they are snuffing psalms through the nose all day long, will not cheat themselves of the pleasure of slandering, and the delight of dooming to perdition. It is amongst these gentle lambs that, for my part, I should look for self-love, malice, pride, the dregs of the heart, far sooner than I would apply to those merry gossips whom you make such bugbears of." For all this there are righteous persons in the world, I admit; though of old the Almighty had difficulty enough to find any store of them in ten towns; and the world, bad enough before, has ever since been getting worse.

I am glad you are satisfied with your son-in-law. As you say, this black coat will whiten him. But as to stopping him in his down-hill course, you ask too much of me. I would not say, ancient, if I were acquainted with his circumstances; but I shall not go groping in the dark, lest some notable might tread on my fingers. Quite ready at the same time to do him a service, and you too, if occasion offered and I could see my way clearly. One thing I can tell you, Reybaz—your son-in-law is saving. New-Year's Day is past, and I have not seen him flush of his gifts. If he treats others as he does me, my opinion is that he will soon be rich. To say the truth, this sharp weather keeps purses closed; so that from the first story to the fifth I have as yet met none but stingy rogues. But the more trouble you take the less you make by it: what you do regularly, people are apt to think it is your duty to do, and pay you with a "Much obliged," or at most a few paltry crowns. Then comes a whole string of ringers, firemen, lamp-lighters, scavengers, and a troop of strangers without name or office, and they get you their Christmas-box filled with what ought to keep me from perishing of cold. And yet, Reybaz, what have I to make both ends meet, but these same trumpery presents, this hole of a lodge, and three or four old crazy watches to repair in the year? And therefore

I shall give my Catherine to her swain, because, as I shall have them to live with me, he will pay me, out of his hundred louis, something for board and lodging that will help to keep the pot boiling. I am at this moment parleying with him on that subject, now while his desire disposes him to listen to me, and to the end that the article may figure in the contract, if it can be brought to bear. Safe bind, safe find. That's the way, Reybaz, I treat your upright man. As for the brats, they will come soon enough; and, if it were customary, I should like to tie him down, by contract also, to have but one: my lodge is not large.

Your affectionate

CHAMPIN.

### LIII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I SEE, Charles, from your satirical portraits, that your cheerfulness has returned, and I am so well pleased to see this the case, that I shall not quarrel with you for the manner in which you speak of these two good ladies, who made you partake of their fine liqueurs. What a strange thing this mixture of sweetmeats and psalms—of sugar-plums with bitter insinuations! I always ask myself how such persons, whom I believe at the bottom are sincere in their faith, manage to reconcile personal enjoyment with renunciation of the world, acrimony with benevolence, and exclusive self-satisfaction with Christian humility. Moreover, we are not unacquainted here with those pamphlets of which these ladies have made you a present. *Colporteurs* come round from time to time and offer them to our peasants, who do not ruin themselves in purchasing them, although the venders offer them very cheap. The real object of these publications is to deprive them of the confidence they place in their pastor; and here again is one of those practices which I find it difficult to reconcile with the teaching of Scripture. M. Prevere attaches little

importance to these attempts; but I imagine that they might succeed in those parishes where the pastor is more indolent and lukewarm, and less venerated than M. Prevere. As for my father, who could see nothing but the offensiveness of the intention, and the craftiness of the means, he was very near giving the *colporteurs* a warm reception, had it not been for the exhortations of M. Prevere, which restrained without convincing him.

I have been greatly amused with your visit to M. Dumont, as well as with your fear of growing ignorant if from this day forward you do not enjoy the fresh air beneath the elms, and labour diligently at doing nothing. However, I think as you think, as M. Dumont thinks, and as my father thinks also; and from this I conclude that, to follow all these different advices at the same time, you can do nothing better than continue exactly as you are doing. You have work, you have profit, and you have leisure also, for you write me most charming letters in which it appears to me you do exactly what M. Dumont recommends, since you sometimes introduce scientific remarks—witness Homer and Nausicaa—and always life, observation, and feeling. If you add to this some acquaintance with distinguished men—an advantage which appears to me almost invaluable—a few good dinners with so affectionate an Amphytrion, and lastly, an occasional visit to the parsonage when the fine weather returns, I do not see in what you will have failed to follow exactly M. Dumont's advice, point for point, without neglecting my father's either.

What an amicable family the Derveys must be! You have made me fancy I was present at that *fête*—all affection and joy, which, those at least, were assuredly not hollow. After such charming scenes, do you imagine that I can contribute any capable of bearing a comparison? Our New-Year's Day was spent like all the preceding ones, with this difference alone, that you were not with us; and that difference, Charles, was sufficient to overcloud our *fête*, and to rob it of all its brightness. I received, in your place, M. Prevere's embrace; and you may be certain that it was intended for us both, and for

you still more than for me. He was touched, and my father also. Had you been with us your presence would have changed the serious thoughts which attend on these anniversary days, into cheerful conversation. After dinner we went down into the village to give and receive the good wishes and hearty shakes of the hand appropriate to the season; in the evening I made a lottery for the children, from which they drew their little prizes: and when the day was ended, I was rejoiced to find that it was over.

I have one thing more to say to you, and that is respecting the chain which I found at the bottom of that pretty box. But why, Charles, such handsome things as these? and if you ruin yourself in this way, of what use will the purse be which I made you? I feel at once confused and touched, and yet am already quite accustomed to adorn myself with this rich necklace, to which I have hung my watch, which I never wore before. I could say a hundred pretty things to you on this subject, about the hours appearing long and my chain light, but I wish to keep a little of my wit for another occasion.

Your LOUISE.

#### LIV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*Geneva.*

I HAVE just left this famous dinner, Louise. It was to-day at two o'clock. I presented myself in full costume at the appointed time. The same domestic opened the door to me. Apparently, my hasty retreat on the former occasion occurred to his mind, for he began to smile on seeing me. That smile overthrew all my equanimity. I imagined that there must be something in my appearance which amused the fellow; and, as the drawing-room doors were at this instant thrown open before me, I expected to see all the distinguished men assembled there burst into a laugh at my appearance. I saw nothing; my faculties were in a state of total eclipse, and my eyes



completely dazzled, during the whole time that M. Dumont was presenting me to everybody assembled, after which they left me at peace. I then began to collect my scattered senses a little.

There were a dozen persons present, including myself. I endeavoured to discover the least distinguished among them, in order that I might take courage to approach him for the sake of uttering a few words, so that I might not have the air of being perfectly dumb. I soon made my selection. He was a gentleman seated a little behind the others, dressed in a rather homely fashion, with a cane suspended from his right arm, which he wore in a sort of sling, and the only one among the assembled guests who was dressed in a frock-coat. I was approaching him as gently as possible, when, perceiving me, his countenance lighted up instantaneously with the kindest and most friendly smile, and he advanced a couple of steps to meet me, holding out his hand. I was about to lose my equilibrium anew, supposing that he mistook me for some other person, when he said, "I know who you are; Dumont has been speaking to me of you, and I trust we shall see more of each other. In the mean time, let us have a little chat together." Then leaning familiarly upon my arm, for he is lame, he advanced towards a sofa, on which we seated ourselves.

There, this gentleman, with the kindest and most friendly interest, made me converse on my present situation, on the nature of my studies, on my future prospects; and, in what he said himself, displayed such commanding intellect, and such unaffected friendship as completely to subdue both my mind and heart. His manner of speaking is grave and forcible, full of nobleness of feeling, and kindness of disposition, and animated by a warmth and interest which render his conversation both endearing and delightful.

I was therefore quite at my ease, and greatly astonished at finding myself so fortunate in my first experiment, when M. Dumont approached. "Well! my friend Bellot is not so very terrible after all, is he?" It was he, Louise! It was the monster! My embarrassment was extreme,

but it displayed itself in such a way that my grateful emotion was easily comprehended. We soon after passed into the dining-room, where, placed between M. Bellot and a gentleman whom I did not know, I did my utmost to avoid notice rather than to please, and to steer clear of awkward blunders rather than parade my knowledge of the usages of the world.

The most delightful thing, Louise, in entertainments of this nature, is to listen, snugly ensconced in some corner, to what is said, to share as a spectator in the animated discussions which are elicited from the contact of superior minds, in those brilliant attacks of grave reasoning or witty sallies which take place between these guests, naturally amiable and moreover warmed by the good cheer, electrified by the pleasure of meeting each other, and who seem to extract from each of the different nectars with which their glasses are filled and emptied by turns, a sort of new flame, a delicate flavour, which adds brilliancy, perfume, and colour to their conversation. But you should see M. Dumont, Louise, and hear him too! Without losing a mouthful, without forgetting a dish, without ever confounding one glass with another, with an ease, a grace, a gaiety, delightful to see, he utters at one moment the most serious sentiment, at another makes the most piquant observation; now he relates some anecdote, again he darts forth some piece of agreeable pleasantry, or else bursts into a laugh so frank, so hearty, so true, that it infects the whole table, and behold all these grave and serious men breaking into such a chorus of laughter that one would think that they were striving which could outdo the other. It is a long time before the last echoes of this joyous tempest subside into a calm. In truth, it only required for my perfect enjoyment of it that I should feel at my ease and in my proper place, and that I should not feel afraid of my neighbours, afraid of M. Dumont, afraid of the servant himself, whose persevering assiduity served still further to increase my alarm.

After the dessert, which was prolonged for a considerable time in animated and cheerful conversation, M. Dumont rose, and we returned to the drawing-room to partake of

coffee. Whilst there, the greater number of the gentlemen approached me in succession, to express their good wishes, and also, I suppose, to encourage me to overcome that timidity which kept me silent. Several of them spoke to me of M. Prevere, and in such terms as to make me feel all the glory and all the happiness of belonging to him. For a moment the conversation even centred on him, and I then ventured to take a part in it. Ah, Louise! if you could only have heard, as I did, what was said of our beloved preceptor! What esteem! what respect! what heartfelt veneration! If you could only have heard that M. Bellot, in a few words full of warmth and seriousness, render a worthy homage to the MAN; while M. Dumont, taking for his theme his character as a preacher, described with admirable clearness his powerful and persuasive eloquence, at once elevated and practical—showed in what lay its secret charm—gave examples of its nature and effects—and, in attempting to give a true picture of it, argued, grew animated, even eloquent! And M. Dumont, Louise, before being a legislator, before he became the most brilliant orator in our councils—was himself a distinguished preacher.

Such was the way in which this dinner passed over. I am still stupified, lost in wonder, and perfectly ashamed at the honour which has been done me, and which I fear may be repeated; for it is M. Dumont's custom thus to draw around him, for the sake of introducing them to, and promoting their connexion with, his friends, such young men as he may remark, or may be brought under his observation, as being gifted with any aptitude for study or any ambition to distinguish themselves. But the only thing which reassures me is, that I must have appeared to-day to be gifted with a remarkable stupidity, and with the sole ambition of eating and drinking again and again! And yet I assure you that this servant at my elbow, and these great men in my front and on either wing, left me very little appetite, and in fact I made a very slight repast. The opportunity was a most excellent one, however. There were all the dishes in the alphabet, Louise!—a perfect medley of wines, and Babel of sauces! I



trembled lest I should make some ridiculous blunder, and I could think of no better plan than to imitate, as closely as possible, the example of my neighbour M. Bellot, whose extreme sobriety served me as a model.

I am, you are aware, Louise, a little subject to being infatuated with people. I require a hero for whom my heart can beat; and sometimes, rather than be disappointed, I take a little too carelessly whatever one falls in my way. But to-day I think I have found in this M. Bellot a man whom I can long continue to venerate, love, and esteem, at my ease, and with good reason. I had often heard him spoken of; for there are few public affairs transacted in which he does not take an active part, as the animating spirit, or the sagacious adviser. Thus I had pictured to myself a grave legislator, very learned and very competent, but still a legislator, neither more nor less. How completely was I mistaken, Louise; and in this man, who is in fact considered one of the most profound lawyers of the present day, how far does his character surpass by its beauty, his heart by its true nobility, his conversation by its kindly feeling, the glory of these acquirements and this science which the world admires in him. How do his manners, his words, and the warmth of that goodness which beams on his countenance, penetrate the heart with a sentiment altogether different from that which springs from superiority of intellect or knowledge! No, in him we have something more than one of those men who merely illustrate science alone. We have one of those men who are an honour to their country, and an honour to humanity, in showing what energy, what constancy it can display for the good, for the useful, for the beautiful! And what matters it that the scene of action is a narrow one? Will any one assert that M. Prevere confers an honour only on the parish in which he conceals his virtues from public gaze?

M. Prevere and M. Bellot are of the same age; but, still more—and I learned this circumstance with a lively satisfaction—they pursued their studies together, and by a singular vicissitude, each of them was originally destined to the career which the other has subsequently embraced.



You are aware that M. Prevere was intended for the bar; but, after having entered that profession, he found nothing in it to employ the energies of his heart, nor that field which was necessary for the exercise of his ardent charity and his burning eloquence. He therefore left the law and became a minister of the gospel. Well! M. Bellot, even beforehand, and while still very young, had done the very reverse. Even when at college his breast glowed with a truly apostolic zeal; he composed sermons, and recited them before his relations; his vocation for the pulpit appeared decided. Hear what befel him in the midst of his triumphs! One day his grandfather, proud of the precocious talents of his grandson, took him to the house of a curate, a friend of his, desiring him at the same time to provide himself with one of these sermons. When they arrived at the priest's house, the good old man informed him that his grandson, a future theologian, already composed discourses, in proof of which he mentioned that the lad had a sermon of his own in his pocket. The curate did not fail to testify his gratification at hearing this news, and express a wish to hear the sermon. Little Bellot accordingly took up his position *a la Bourdaloue*, gave out his text with great unction, discussed it with energy, and was quite triumphant in his peroration; for his discourse turned upon the errors of the Romish church, and he looked forward confidently to the honour of engaging the priest in a controversy. When he had concluded, the latter smiled good-humouredly, tapped him gently on the shoulder, and said, "Very well done, indeed, my little friend;" then calling to his servant, he added, "Jeanette, bring some apples for this good little boy." Is not this anecdote a delightful one? I wish you could have heard M. Bellot relate it to us himself at dinner, and confess at the same time that never before had apples tasted so bitter to him.

This mortification did not alter in the least the plans of the young student; but when, subsequently, he took a calmer view of his own character and capacities—of his keen and straight-forward intellect, his peculiar aptitude for matters of argument and discussion, his thirst for order

and clearness in his conceptions—he began by degrees to draw off from the profession of the pulpit, for which these qualities are neither the sole ones necessary nor even the first in importance, and devote himself to the study of the law, in which they assure success and pre-eminence. Having thus at length entered on his true career, he gave himself up with heart and soul to the most laborious and difficult studies, and, by the help of determined perseverance, much more than by the gift of rapid conception, he attained that supremacy which is universally accorded to him in the domain of law and legislation. For some years he pleaded at the bar; seldom losing a cause, because he never undertook a bad one. Afterwards, having become an eminent jurisconsult, he prepared and discussed all our most important laws, and by the weight of his reason, and by the influence of knowledge and understanding, united to probity and patriotic spirit, he is at the present day the oracle of our councils, and the pride of a country which looks up to him with veneration. But what is most melancholy, Louise, is, that this man, whose life is so wrapped up in the public good that it seems as if no affair of importance could be transacted without him—this man is lame and infirm. He is so weak on the right side of his person that he frequently meets with dangerous falls and disasters; he can scarcely walk alone, and he is obliged to write with his left hand. His energy of mind alone supports him, and his sole passion is the public welfare.

I knew these things only in part before; but, after having seen the man, my curiosity was warmly excited, and I introduced the subject when speaking to M. Dumont, who was so complaisant as to enter into all these details respecting his friend. This M. Bellot, Louise, all infirm as he is, and although his fortune is now well established, has lodged on a second floor for a great many years, in a meanly furnished apartment, the same which formerly served him as his advocate's chambers. Here, since the age of twenty, he has constantly practised the habit of rising at four o'clock in the morning, to secure that silence and solitude which are so necessary for his labours, with-

out trenching on those hours in which his experience and his understanding are at the service of his fellow citizens. Men of all ranks and all ages, ignorant and learned, frequent this apartment. He receives them all with affability, he listens to them with patience, and bestows the same scrupulous attention on their trifling affairs that he would afford to matters of the greatest concern; and thus they leave him, satisfied with his advice and flattered by their reception. This laborious life, as you may well suppose, leaves him no leisure either for luxury or idleness; and his manners are therefore austere, his temperance strict, and his habits stamped with an air of antique simplicity, which contrasts, without his perceiving it, with the refinement and ease which reign around him. Scarcely will he spare time now and then to share the repast of his friend Dermont, and still less frequently does he bestow his company on others; but when he does enter into society he brings nothing with him but gaiety and good humour. He is a perfect stranger to every species of pedantry and affectation. His parents, who are still spared to him, were ruined, his family were stricken by reverses. He has softened all their afflictions, and repaired all their disasters; and he seems to have renounced the idea of marriage for the sole purpose of being a father to all his relations. His sisters, his nephews, his nieces, all look up to him; while the filial respect, the simple and tender affection of this son who has attained such high consideration, form the glory and happiness of his aged parents. What a career, Louise! and how much do these traits of his private life, which fame leaves in the shade that she may publish the triumphs of his learning and eloquence, enhance and complete the merit of a superior man! How do they elevate, even in his case, the manly virtue and winning greatness of the man and of the citizen, far above the celebrity of the legislator!

And if you only knew how much his noble countenance, his eyes full of fire, his majestic forehead, his winning smile—how much his simple dress, his attitude, and his harmonious voice—correspond with all that one hears of his life and character! Everybody says that his



countenance resembles in all points that of Bonaparte; and I know people who delight in this puerile comparison. I feel a sort of painful impression when I hear it made: it is saying either too little or too much. It is provoking, *à propos* of a slight accidental resemblance between the features of a conqueror who has filled the world with his name, and those of a citizen scarcely known to fame, to draw a parallel which must crush the latter, and crush him unjustly. It is running the risk of provoking ridicule where ridicule would be profanation, since it would be directed against that which is higher, greater, more sacred than power, fame, or glory ever can be—against sterling and modest virtues, constant and devoted patriotism—all that is venerable in the soul, the mind, and the character.

I have dilated with pleasure, Louise, on a subject which has so engrossed my mind that in truth I should scarcely have known how to speak to you on any other topic to-day. Even before I had left M. Dumont's house I was impatient to come and tell you everything; to communicate to you that respect, that admiration with which my heart is filled; and to receive from you for this virtuous man that homage of which he is so worthy. Will you, like me, place him in the same rank in your esteem as M. Prevere? Will you, like me, see in these two school-fellows, who mutually exchanged that career which each had previously chosen—two valiant soldiers, who, for the sake of waging a more effectual warfare, exchange both their post and their armour—two men, who, by opposite routes, attain the same goal, and whose entire lives, absorbed in the single desire of being benevolent and useful, are one closely woven tissue of virtuous actions and philanthropic services? Tell me what you think; and if you believe that I have been led astray by my feelings, recall me as quickly as possible to that exclusive esteem for our beloved preceptor, from which I already reproach myself for having, even for a few moments, departed.

CHARLES.

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## LV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I COULD not refrain, Charles, from reading a considerable part of your letter to M. Prevere, and he is rejoiced to find that your partiality is so well bestowed. While confirming all the details which you have sent me, he mentioned others no less interesting. "M. Bellot," added he, "has more knowledge and talents than are necessary to make him celebrated, and too much modesty, candour, and real merit, ever to be so. He is one of those citizens who devote themselves to labour rather than to glory, and whose infinite value is recognised much less by the light which they diffuse around, than by the blank which they leave behind them. Tell Charles that I am happy that he has been able to comprehend and appreciate such a character. It is of inestimable value for a young man to have seen such examples soon enough to prevent his ever doubting, amid the after trials and temptations of life, of the existence of virtue; and he ought to be full of gratitude to M. Dumont for procuring him this advantage."

After this, what reply shall I make to your questions, Charles? I am forced to accede to your judgment, and, following your example, to place M. Bellot on an equal footing, if not in my affection, at least in my esteem, with our beloved preceptor. I share heartily in your admiration, in your enthusiasm; and I cannot deny, however much my feelings may lean towards M. Prevere, that these two men, although with different talents and in a different sphere, are yet following exactly the same line of conduct, and have only started from a common point to arrive at the same end. Then, by what narrow sentiment of vain-glory or besotted self-love should I refuse to render to each my humble, but equal homage? Is it not encouraging, is it not rejoicing to the heart, to behold the circle of those beings enlarge, who, in embodying virtue and rendering it as it were visible, make us

cherish it with delight; who propagate its gentle empire, and make its influence felt even by minds sunk in debasement and folly? I submit, therefore, Charles. I have not consulted M. Prevere upon this delicate point, as you may readily suppose; but I read, both in his conversation and his countenance, that he places himself far below his old school-fellow, and that his modesty alone would suffer were he to read our letters.

Your happy blunder, your agonies, and your sobriety also, amused me very much. I would give all the world to have had a peep at you through that magic glass which we read of in the Arabian Nights. Moreover you draw so seducing a picture of the scene in which you played a part, that, in truth, I am far more inclined to envy than to pity you. That which has astonished me most, is to find how much the cheer of these distinguished men is distinguished also. I thought it was only stupid people who eat so daintily; and from this day forth I must change the idea which I had formed of the incompatibility between a *gourmand* appetite and that delicate and playful wit which you have described.

Whilst you are thus plunging into all the luxuries of civilized life, we, country savages, are fighting with the wolves. Only imagine, that, on Monday evening, I had gone out in the twilight to visit the Piombets, when I saw, about a hundred paces from me, in Olivet's meadow, an animal crouching down, which I took for a dog. Dourak barked though he saw nothing; but began immediately to scent out a track, which soon led him straight to our friend the wolf. Then ensued a frightful combat. I called out loudly; Antoine ran towards me, and then my father, and soon the whole village was on foot. When I heard them shouting, "It is the wolf!" I was as much afraid as if I were actually devoured, and I flew back again to the parsonage. At the sight of so many people, the animal took to flight; and in his retreat rushed right before the two Paulets, who were returning from the chase. Both of them levelled their pieces at the same moment, but the creature fell pierced only by a single ball; and the grand question which

agitates the village up to the present moment is to ascertain which of the two brothers had the honour of the conquest. For my own part I pronounce in favour of Dourak; for it was he, who, after having severely mangled the wolf, pursued him in his flight, and drove him, limping and disabled, in the way of the Paulets, who only managed to give him the finishing stroke between them.

The result of all this is that I never venture out now at twilight; and, until the snows are gone, and we are relieved from the visits of these famished guests, I shall not stir a single step unaccompanied by Dourak. As for him, this adventure has brisked him up greatly, although in the struggle he left the remaining portion of his ear behind. The moment I speak to him he looks fixedly at me with an attentive air, as if convinced that henceforth no other topic can interest me but that of wolves; and every instant he darts out to snuff the air in all directions, even though I tell him that he must not expect such a treat every day. On the other hand, my father has collected a host of stories respecting wolves, with which he entertains me; so that, if the wind continues, I shall not know where to hide myself to escape from my fears. The Paulets have stuffed their animal, and they intend to carry him to-morrow as a trophy to Geneva, where he will assuredly pass before your eyes.

It is eleven o'clock at night; everybody is gone to bed; Dourak is barking; and I must leave you, to endeavour to fall asleep as soon as possible.

Yours LOUISE.

## LVI.

### CHAMPIN TO THE PRECENTOR.

*Geneva.*

THIS is to apprise you that your notable does not hold himself beaten; more by token that, though his mother is anxious to marry him, he has no stomach for any of the damsels up yonder, and particularly for one who is, as it were, thrust upon him, and whom many a gentleman would

snap at. This is a young lady of eighteen, all lilies and roses, as the song says, who has the carriage of a nymph, and is this winter the queen of the balls, as well for beauty as for elegant dress—to say nothing of that joyous look and that brightness of the eye which triumph gives to the fair. The parents are agreeable; the girl, though not yet smitten, does not say no; but M. Ernest, whose heart is already pierced by yours, lets people say and do what they like, and cares no more about the rose which they hold up to his nose, than a cock cares about a quail.

This young lady is a Demoiselle Dupuech. •M. Dervev educated her. I knew the grandfather, who was an iron-monger at Constance—a blade of that sort who, as the saying is, never wear powder when the *Bise* blows. By selling his sickles, and living on nutshells, he scraped together near a million; with which his son has speculated so much to the purpose that he is now one of our wealthy folks, living in great style; keeping his town mansion and his livery servants, and forgetting all about the nail-shop from which he sprung. After the example of our great folk, he has contrived to have but two children, that he may not be obliged to scatter his millions, and that the family, instead of going down again to the shop, may ascend to the syndicate. To help up this a little, he has changed the Dupuech, which his father signed himself, into the genteel Du Puech, engraved on his door and scrawled on his visiting-cards, which I have handled. In another ten years, Reybaz, we shall have our counts and our barons; and equality, which is already dead, will be buried.

Hence it is that this fine fellow would gladly give his daughter to the heir of the De la Cours, because this alliance would brush away the rest of the filings that still stick to him and his. But, behold you, the heir of the De la Cours kicks out at every one who talks of this marriage; and he has squabbles with his mother, in which he storms and sends to the devil the pert minx, and all the others among whom they want to choose him a partner, declaring that not one of them is fit to kiss the shoe-tie of your Louise; and that if he cannot have her he will



remain single. Meanwhile, at the ball, he regularly turns the cold shoulder on all whom his mother has spoken or is likely to speak to him about—waltzing with the ugliest in the room rather than with such as people might suppose him to be courting. As you may imagine, these poor girls, who have not had a whirl for long enough, start from their perch, and act the amiable and show their agility, enough to make one split with laughing. His idea is that your plan will not and cannot be carried out; that, even if it be true that you ever thought for a moment of this Charles, it is a mere whim which reflection will dispel; and that, pitted against such a champion, he is not to consider himself as beaten at the first rebuff. Meanwhile, he purposes in spring to return to the parsonage; contrary to the advice of his mother, who would fain take him to the end of the world. Hold yourself forewarned, then, and at the same time admit that tongues are good for something; since I have all this, partly from Jaquemay, who washes for the De la Cours, partly from Chapelon, by means of her husband, who waits at the balls.

Though in your letter, Reybaz, you rest upon this, that “what is done is done;” you would do well, I think, to see rather if “what is done is well done.” I say again that, in a matter of marriage, in which the life of a child is at stake, this is the only point to look to; without troubling your head about words or promises, which, as it is well known, have no value till marked with the flourish of the civil officers. Be certain, Reybaz, that this De la Cour, to behave as he does, not being moreover a novice in regard to women, and though able to choose at pleasure from our fair ones of the quality folk, must be regularly smitten. The obstacle that disheartens the lukewarm only irritates the passionate; and this freshness and simplicity of our girls, when once felt by one of these *blasés*, constantly surrounded by those flounced and furbelowed dolls, acts upon them like a charm which they must have at any price. Look out then for this swain coming and hovering about that bait which fascinates him, and by his movements alarming Louise or flooring that Charles; and, thus warned, consider, while you have yet

time left, if you ought, at this time of day, to splice your daughter's lot to this foundling, rather than gently steer her destiny towards the port of a good family, where a rich and comely gentleman opens his arms to receive her at the threshold, and would feel it an honour to give her shelter. It is at the parting of two roads that it behoves to choose the right, for fear of getting among thorns and briars, from which it may afterwards be hard to get clear. Strive therefore, ancient, to see your way clearly; and be sure that my advice is the fruit of having lived fifty years in this paltry town, where I have had occasion to learn, rather better than you, the ways of the world, of which you only get a glimpse through the trees of your farm or from the windows of your vestry.

As for your son-in-law, Reybaz, I humbly beg his pardon; it is not to the rake that he turns, but to the fine gentleman. There he is, cramming himself with good dinners, and aping the beau, neither more nor less than a legitimate of twenty-four carats. He soars so high that even if I would, I cannot follow him; not having admission to those Olympuses where he feasts with the gods. On his first coming, with his country dress, one knew where to have him; but now there is nothing left for it but to doff my hat to his glossy beaver and his ruffled wristbands. Is it not a burning shame to see this lad, picked up off the ground, tricking himself out in this way in superfine cloth and plaited shirts! You will see, Reybaz, that presently he will be too smart for your sacristy, if he does not already think you highly honoured in having him. It is upon us, humble folk, that he first tries his hand; but your turn will come: only wait—that's all. I have told you how, in order to pay his tailors and his perfumers, and all the strollers that go up and down stairs, he has bilked me of my Christmas-box. It is apparently to get rid of me still more that he has hired an individual to clean his boots and brush his clothes. You may judge whether I take kindly to this chap. In consequence I pay him up, but on the sly. I let him knock below for hours; that is because I am hard of hearing. As soon as he begins brushing his clothes on the landing-place, I fall

to sweeping; it is my right. With a kick I upset his pot of blacking; beg pardon, didn't see it. I will oblige him to decamp, or my name is not Jean Marc.

*A propos*, do you know, old fellow, that I have my own troubles too with this suitor of mine? Here he is, secretly put up by my meek-faced Catherine, rebelling and refusing to come and nestle in my lodge. Whereupon I said to him, "Jog your way elsewhere, and a pleasant journey!"—and to her, "Make shift without a husband, since your school-master listens to bad advice." This was to frighten them. The very next day they came to a composition, denying that they had any intention to rebel, and offering to pay me board, by reason that, if Catherine were taken from me, I must hire a servant in her stead; but at the same time refusing to come and live in my lodge, saying that it was too small, so impatient are these chits to have a whole school of children of their own rearing. I have not yet consented; meanwhile I allow them to see one another, without however leaving them alone together since their little plot to thwart me has come to light. And look you, Reybaz, how soon these slips of girls get knowing! My Catherine is a meek one—I have not, God be thanked, allowed her much of her own way—and yet here she is, at the very outset, winding herself round that lover of hers, and making a tool of him quietly to upset her father! What is to be done? Such has been the way ever since the days of Eve. Men are gifted with strength, women with cunning; and, while strength now and then conquers, cunning reigns for ever. One thing I am glad of, however—namely, that this booby, after ruling the street urchins with such a high hand, will learn, in his turn, what it is to be ruled by this lambkin, who does not marry him until after filing his teeth and paring his nails.

JEAN MARC, the ancient.

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## LVII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

THE Paulets have just left this with their animal. I showed them into the drawing-room, where we found the Demoiselles Dervev. They at first uttered a loud shriek, and then laughed afterwards very heartily at their alarm. The idea then occurred to us to gratify all the neighbourhood with a sight of the monster; and accordingly we sent the Paulets to the two old ladies and their lap-dog. These good ladies, imagining that they saw the great beast of the Apocalypse, remained stupified with terror, while their little cur vanished in the shady recesses of an alcove. Recovering in a short time from their terror, they showed the Paulets the door, insulted the wolf, lectured their servant, rebuked the porter, and contracted a great amount of animosity against the whole human race. Seeing this, the lap-dog left his retreat and began to yelp vociferously: he yelped at the by-passers, he yelped at the noises of the door, he yelped when there was nothing to yelp at, and he will continue to yelp until his mistresses have forgiven the whole human race. This is the mode of conduct of this detestable little time-server, whom I despise as heartily as I esteem our Dourak. Brave Dourak! I long so to see his honest face again! Endeavour to send him to me, Louise: here is the thaw arrived; the wolves will not visit you again.

But it is about quite another thing that I wished to speak to you. I have seen M. Ernest! The meeting took place last night at the house of Madame Domergue. He did not expect to see me, and, certainly, I did not seek him. Nothing was said—I think it was better for both parties; but I will tell you everything that happened.

It was at a ball. He came rather late, during a country-dance in which I was figuring. I felt a good deal agitated on seeing him, but my emotion had subsided



before he perceived me. When the dance was ended I conducted my partner to her place, which happened to be close beside him. He affected to be unconscious of my presence. I concluded from this that he did not wish to recognise me, and, as it was not my place to introduce myself, the matter rested there. We continued, during the whole evening, to hover round each other, and to look without seeing. Twenty times, however, our eyes met; and if he succeeded in surprising a blush on my countenance, I could read on his an expression of haughty disdain. Let him be disdainful—I have no objection! Let him refuse to recognise me, let him forget us for ever; so far from being afflicted, he could do me no greater favour. And if he would add to this obligation the still greater one of marrying Mademoiselle Du Puech—a very rich and handsome young lady, to whom the public has already united him—I should go, I believe, and pay him a visit to mark my satisfaction, and to express my ardent wishes for his perfect felicity. Unfortunately, judging from the manner in which he conducted himself towards this young lady, the public, it appears to me, must be mistaken in the matter.

Madame De la Cour was there also, and did not lose sight of us for a single instant. I scarcely knew whether, after the reception I had experienced from her son, I ought to approach her and pay my respects as usual. However, that I might not be exposed to the annoyance of appearing to shun her during the whole evening, I bowed respectfully in passing, and I had every reason to congratulate myself on having listened to this inspiration. A most gracious reception, Louise, and so kind. Charmed to meet me, charmed to hear news of the parsonage; a thousand amiable things of Mademoiselle Louise, and returned again and again to Mademoiselle Louise. In fact I believe that, had we been alone, she would have openly congratulated me, and that I should not have been able to prevent myself from embracing her. Madame De la Cour, as you are aware, says everything with so much ease and grace: she can caress, and insinuate, and pique, without appearing to do so. It was in this way that she

said, with the most natural air in the world, in the hearing of all the ladies who were seated around her, "I am delighted to see, Monsieur Charles, that, occupied and *preoccupied* as you are said to be, you can yet spare a little time for pleasure." I blushed to the very roots of my hair, and stammered out some silly repartee or other. Heavens! Louise, how I should like to acquire this usage of the world, which in my heart I esteem so little, and which, in my heart also, I feel to be so convenient, so necessary, the moment one enters a drawing-room. How soon one looks like a simpleton in the presence of these people, to whom the world with its conventionalisms, its mental reservations, its formulas, appears to be their natural element; who sport with perfect ease, who walk with lightness and grace upon this soil where I am continually losing my equilibrium, and esteem myself very fortunate if I can escape without falling at full length! And, to speak the truth, I have made very little progress in these matters, notwithstanding all my zeal. Whenever I attempt to display any ease of manner, I seem impudent even in my own eyes: I burn with shame, and sink back even lower than I was previously. I have therefore found no refuge but in timidity, which, though it may on some occasions have its good points, yet, in a drawing-room, has more of the disagreeableness of a punishment than the charm of a virtue.

However, Louise, I left Madame Domergue's house both comforted and pleased. Even the injury of M. Ernest's disdain is agreeable to me; if I could only be certain that he includes you in my disgrace, how much I should love that good young man! He possesses much of that ease of manner in which I am so deficient; and he has also another merit which is rather rare—that of dancing with a number of young ladies who without him would not dance at all. This merit ought to gain him the heart of a great many mothers, without reckoning that of the lady who gives the ball. This Mademoiselle Du Puech, to whom public report has given him, was there, but he did not dance with her, and scarcely appeared to notice her. She is very handsome, and all the gentlemen dispute the

honour of her hand, while she appears to be intoxicated with all this homage, without being in the least anxious for that which M. Ernest refuses. She chatted once or twice with Madame de la Cour, who spoke to her with exactly the same easy grace which she displays towards all who accost her, but without anything more marked in her manner, as far as I could perceive.

Previously to this interview, Louise, I had been haunted from time to time by the appearance of those phantoms which you know of, but I think that this time they have taken to flight for good and all. But before this is quite the case, it is necessary that I should see M. Ernest once again, should talk with Madame De la Cour, that this lady should let me understand plainly that she knows you are promised to me, and that she is delighted at it both on her own account and mine; for it was exactly whilst I felt my countenance flush with embarrassment at her remarks, that I saw these phantoms scamper off at their utmost speed. To regain complete tranquillity, the only thing now necessary is to avoid the society of this malicious porter, whose remarks, whatever they may be, never fail to send me away dejected and sorrowful. I have already begun to keep him at a distance; and I intend to take such a position towards him, that, if he wishes to converse with me, he must first wait until I speak to him. In that case he would have to wait a very long time. He is an ill-natured man, Louise, rest assured of that, always busying himself with some intrigue or some piece of scandal. His lodge is the resort of all the ill-natured gossiping women in the neighbourhood; it is a punishment to have to pass under his look and afterwards to be exposed to the tongues of these women! He is both feared and hated by all in the house; it seems as if he were tolerated only because no one can be found courageous enough to expose themselves to the vengeance of his malignant tongue by dismissing him. Ah, if I were only his master, this ill-natured Cerberus should not hold his post an hour longer, and I would snap my fingers at his remarks when he was at a distance from me!

My project at present, Louise, is to withdraw from all society. I renounce all *fêtes* for the remainder of the winter. Here are the thaws already come, we shall soon see the first symptoms of spring; and as it is in spring that I must render an account, it is time that I were devoting myself seriously to study. I should have already taken this step had I not wished to meet M. Ernest. Now that I am aware on what footing we henceforth stand, I have nothing to do either with balls or with him. I am about, therefore, to retire into my little chamber, and to spend my time like a studious hermit. This project delights me; I shall see nothing of the exterior world, nothing but your letters, which are as necessary to me, and far more sweet, than bread to a prisoner. Endeavour then to make my supply a daily one. I have put my chamber in order, arranged my table, hid my tongs, shut up my coffer, which is only to be visited at the hours of recreation; everything now breathes of method and study. Adieu then, banquets, dances, *fêtes*; adieu, foolish and unpleasing amusements, empty pleasures, vain and noisy joys, in which I have lost so many hours that I might have passed here in the delightful company of my own heart, all full of Louise, and all rich in happiness.

CHARLES.

## LVIII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE scarcely courage, Charles, to interrupt those meditations to which you have delivered yourself up in your hermitage. Here are five days glided away since your renunciation of the world. Be kind enough to inform me if, up to this time, your tongs remain still locked in your cupboard. Two words will suffice to enlighten me, and I shall then be enabled to judge whether your conversion is sincere.

But why did you experience so violent an emotion on seeing M. Ernest once more? And why did you find your-



self so tranquillized after having seen him? In truth I no longer understand you very clearly upon this point, and your imagination travels over roads where mine is not able to follow it. Throughout the whole affair, the only thing which grieves and surprises me is his want of politeness towards you: this is not natural to him; and his position is too high to lead one to suspect him of the pettiness of not wishing to appear to know you. However it is no concern of mine to search into the mystery which hangs over the caprices of M. De la Cour; and I am quite of your opinion that we have no reason to distress ourselves either with his disdain or his forgetfulness.

I recognised Madame De la Cour far better in the reception which she gave you. This lady, notwithstanding her rank, has always been kind and amiable towards us; and it is not her wont to be rude and haughty to any person whatsoever with whom she comes into contact. For my own part, I am very grateful for her remembrance of me, and I heartily forgive her indiscreet remark, on account of the benefit you have derived from it. How often have I admired in her that ease of manner, so elegant and at the same time so unstudied; that vivacity, sometimes graceful sometimes *piquante*, which renders her conversation so agreeable, even when it turns on trifles of no importance! You call this knowledge of the world, but it is, I think, something more and something better; and there are many persons who are thoroughly conversant with the usages of society, and the conventionalisms of the saloons, whether great or little, who do not possess this delightful tact, which appears to me to be the result rather of a natural gift than of a polite and worldly education. In this sense, at least, I share with you the admiration which you avow for this amiable and attractive ease of manner; without however joining in your abuse of timidity, which is neither a virtue nor a punishment, as you have thought proper to designate it, but for a young man, as well as for a young girl, the real knowledge of the world, and what both one and other ought to feign, if they have it not by nature.

But, in my opinion, where M. De la Cour excels in true

politeness, is when he asks those ladies to dance whose slight attractions deter the common herd of partners. I feel that if I were in the place of these poor young ladies, I should distinguish him above all others as an amiable man, and that if I were the mistress of the house I should consider him better versed in the usages of society than any other person whatsoever. How fortunate I am, therefore, to spend my life in the country, and not to be forced to enter the great world! How melancholy must it be to be invited to a ball and never to stir from one's seat! To see one's companions join in the dance, brilliant with gaiety and happiness, and remain a neglected looker-on, at once disdained by the gentlemen and pitied by the mammas! How does it happen, then, that any enter a ball-room but those who are graceful as angels, and beautiful as the day!

I persist in thinking, Charles, that your suspicions of M. Champin are exaggerated. You have transformed him into a hateful spectre; although I am certain that if he were as you say, my father would have no connexion with him. It is not that he is blind to his defects, and in particular to his love of scandal, which he hinted at in speaking to me very recently of him; but at the same time he says that he is an honest man, one of the good old stock, rather out-spoken, always ready with his jest, and who is in reality far better than he seems. Moreover, even entertaining the opinion which you do respecting him, Charles, it appears to me that you ought to humour rather than offend him, and not run the risk of irritating a man whom you believe to be so dangerous. This is the play which you say is pursued by all the inmates of the house; and why should you imagine yourself more out of the reach of M. Champin's intrigues and slander than they? Are you not, on the contrary, interested in gaining his good graces, since he stands in the position of a friend and correspondent to my father? Pray, then, excuse in him the faults which belong rather to his condition than to his character, and, to gratify me, live with him on good terms, and do not irritate him by any of your proceedings.

I write to you with all my windows wide open. What

do you think, in this month, of the summer weather which we have had for the last three days? What a contrast between this moist, warm air, and those crisp frosts which so lately benumbed the country. All here is melting and thawing around us, and the road is a perfect rivulet. Trees, roofs, walls, are all dripping, all bedewed with the same cold perspiration. This is not the happiest moment to admire nature, and yet I find that it awakens within me the sweetest presentiments, and recalls the most delightful impressions. Not one of these gentle breezes that does not announce the approach of life, that does not harbinger the leaves, the flowers, the bright and happy days of spring, with all their sweet enjoyments; not one that does not whisper that all these inundated roads will soon dry up, that these barren trees will soon be covered with foliage, and that the hermit will leave his grotto to make a pilgrimage to the parsonage.

Speaking of grottoes, these summer winds have committed a theft upon me. The frost had pencilled upon my windows the most charming landscapes; I spent whole hours in gazing on them, and I brought M. Prevère to admire them also. Every morning I found some new tree which had outspread its delicate branches on the slope of a picturesque mountain; some trunk, sparkling with pendant wreaths of the most minute mosses, thrown like a bridge over some yawning ravine; some tiny flowers which had sprung up; some rocks which had rolled from their positions; lastly—marvellous sight!—a little grotto, without tongs, just the retreat for a studious anchorite! It had four panes; they were four domains. Where are they now?

“Where are the snows of bygone years?”

says the ballad. Is it not melancholy?—all our joys are fleeting. Our domains leave us, or else we leave our domains. Everything has an end; nothing is stable; and every instant we are led to ask,

“Where are the snows of bygone years?”

Your LOUISE.

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## LIX.

## THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

THE Widow Crozat is ruined. She has her kitchen-garden left and the four walls of her house, but that's all. The fire has devoured all, and her son Louis. They are just now dragging him out of the ruins. May God support the unfortunate creature, thus tried in the tenderest part!

It was last night, about one o'clock, that the fire broke out. As I was asleep, Antoine rapped at my door. On opening my eyes, I saw the glare of the fire reddening the walls and the floor, and with one leap I was at the window. Louise was up, and M. Prevere already on the spot: I ran there half dressed. At the moment when I reached it, all was already in flames—some articles of furniture and a cow excepted. They were searching on all sides for the son, and Brachoz had ventured out upon a beam that was burned to a coal. He then got down on the side where the trough was, and made his way into the inside, from whence he came back straight to M. Prevere and whispered something in his ear; whereupon M. Prevere proceeded towards the Bouvets, who had taken home the poor widow. Brachoz had got a glimpse of the body of poor Louis lying among the ruins. The news immediately spread, and everybody was pained at so sad a catastrophe befalling a widow, already deeply wounded in her affections. M. Prevere is there still, shut up alone with her, and we don't know yet how the poor creature bears her affliction.

The fire began in the barn. It is said that two trampers had got into it to pass the night there, and that it was by their pipe that the calamity was caused. Young Olivet, who was one of the first that came, found Legrand's ladder, which these fellows had taken to get up, still leaning against the south wall; and about midnight, Redard, being wakened by his mare—which, having got loose, was stamping and kicking in the stable—saw two men running away across the meadows. They must



be the same who had knocked up the people of La Boverie, crying that the hamlet was on fire. They were among the first who ran to the spot. Olivet and the Redards had hurried off to fetch the fire-engine of the De la Cours; but long before their return the flames had consumed the interior to the roof, where, reaching the thatch, all steeped with wet from the thaw, it took time to break through it and to spread outside. It was while the roof was burning that Brachoz darted into the stable, already full of smoke, in order to drag out the cow, which was lowing there without offering to stir from the spot. At last he laid hold of her and brought her out, leading her by the horns. Then, along with Louis Crozat, he made his way through the kitchen into the room behind, where Dame Crozat kept her valuables, and secured her wedding necklace of fine gold, her watch, and a bond for one hundred and twenty florins on the Melazes. While he was making a package of the whole, the people outside called to him, "Come out! come out!" Louis Crozat ran off: but, just as he was crossing the threshold, the kitchen floor fell in, and Brachoz found himself shut up in the back-room; and there were the flames darting in at the door like the ten tongues of a beast of hell. Then, with a mattock, which was reached to him from the back of the house, Brachoz forced out a bar of the window and leaped into the garden, while a shower of splinters rained upon him from the roof. At the same instant Louis Crozat, who had gone in again on the side where the water-trough stood, to save the pig, perished, crushed to death by the beam of the stable, both he and the animal!

This house was burned once before, in '83; by reason that, standing by itself, and having then a pigeon-house at top, the point of which attracted the fire of heaven, it was struck by lightning, and three cows perished. Being rebuilt, here it is destroyed again: 'tis a warning to build elsewhere. There are spots against which Fate has a spite; witness Couvet, where the house of the Chevins was burned three times in the century. This was no great matter to the Chevins, who are well off, both by what they made themselves and what was left them; but as for

Widow Crozat, this house, with what Brachoz saved, formed her all, together with the arms of her son Louis, of which she is now bereft. This is a case in which it behoves us to assist one another, and to this end I write to you to get your contribution.

REYBAZ.

## LX.

CHARLES TO THE PRECENTOR.

*General.*

I SEND you, Monsieur Reybaz, all the money that I have, and next Tuesday you will receive my salary for this month. Poor Louis! What a frightful calamity! And Brachoz, who was so near sharing the same fate! There are few who have so affectionate and courageous a heart as Brachoz, Monsieur Reybaz. But you say nothing of Louise; I am most anxiously awaiting a letter from her.

The Dérveys share our feelings of consternation, They have made a collection amongst their circle, which has produced fifty-three florins. I send them in addition to my own offering. It will be a real pleasure for me to give lessons, as many as ever she wishes, for the poor widow. Tell her so; and add that I join my tears to hers. Louis Crozat was the same age as myself, and was always my favourite companion. I regret him most sincerely.

Your affectionate

CHARLES.

## LXI.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

You know all. What a dreadful event! The sight of this poor woman rends my heart. She believes herself forsaken of God. She will scarcely listen to M. Prevere; and neither my attentions nor caresses afford her the least consolation.

I wished her to come and take up her residence at the parsonage until her future plans were arranged. But she prefers remaining with the Bouvets, in sight of those ruins, upon which her eyes are constantly fixed. She takes no steps either to prepare her mourning, or to make the necessary preparations for the interment of her child. Sometimes I am tempted to believe that her reason is affected, and yet when she is spoken to, she answers with sense and simplicity. I have endeavoured to rouse her from her stupor by speaking to her of her present situation, and of the necessity of providing for her future maintenance. Her answer was—"I want but little. I will spin for my support." In less than three years to have lost her husband, her child, and everything she possessed! What courage can she have remaining? What interest can life offer her?

My father exercises greater influence over her than any one else. He has always shown a warm affection for her, and besides his language is better in unison with her own. My father's advice is, that, with the proceeds of the cow and the necklace, joined to the proceeds of a debt which is owing to her by the Melaz family, and some little money which may be collected in different ways, she should build a little cottage at the other end of her kitchen-garden, where she can support herself by her wheel. The poor woman allows him to act as he pleases, and to take all the necessary steps for commencing the building early in spring. Madame De la Cour has sent four hundred florins to M. Prevere, a sum which will greatly facilitate this plan. Pray thank the Dervev family. I am in such low spirits that I must defer until another time the pleasure of writing to you at more length.

•  
Your LOUISE.

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## LXII.

## THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

*The Parsonage.*

I SEND you inclosed, Champin, the plan of a building. Everything is there, measurement and materials. You will see by it that for the sum of three thousand four hundred and ninety-three florins, five sous, six deniers, Lamèche offers to build for poor Crozat a small cottage, upon a foundation of masonry, and roofed with flat tiles. What I want of you is to show this plan to a confidential person, and get him to tell you whether Lamèche has overcharged, or whether, having given the lowest estimate, it would be superfluous to ask elsewhere. As soon as you have fulfilled this commission you will return me the paper, that I may give an answer to the other before he gets out of conceit with the job, or throws it up because he is mistrusted. I believe Lamèche well-intentioned, and that he does not mean to make too much by the work; however, in this case, as it is the widow's mite that will suffer, I wish to be able to render a good account of the way in which it has been laid out.

Your last has reached me, in which you branch out about that notable, and then launch out on me with your advice, exhorting me to think before I act. As for acting that is already done, Champin, and as for thinking, I pass my life in doing so; what need therefore of your exhortation to it? It was not from choice nor for my pleasure that I yoked the lot of my Louise to that of Charles; but it *was* from choice, and of my own free and deliberate will that I rejected that notable. Let sated worldlings stick to their puppets! Let libertines respect the chaste! To my eye, wealth, once sullied, never recovers its brightness, just because I do see clearly and am not blind. Granted that you have seen more of the ways of the world than I; but I have seen better than you the course of that young man, and in order to dislike him one need only to be faithful to one's just repugnances. The way in which you speak of him would, of itself, be enough to turn me against him,



if it were not done already. My Louise, and her virgin freshness, to serve to gratify the whim of a rake! Champin, you mistake your man; and if you wish me to listen to you, speak otherwise concerning the child of my Theresa.

As for Charles and the complaints which you make of him, there is one which I shall bear in mind to speak to him of it, as soon as his purse, which he emptied the other day for poor Crozat, has become somewhat filled again. He is not naturally stingy, as you imagine, but he is incessantly forced to appear so; not having anything for the passing day, because he has lavished all on the preceding. Since he has been earning money, if he had been careful, he might have provided for all needful occasions, and saved, according to my calculation, four or five hundred florins. Instead of this, he has already cleared himself out entirely, twice or three times, and is obliged to wait for his next receipts before he can complete his donation. From this point to running into debt the distance is not great; let him beware, nevertheless, how he oversteps it! He has already promised the whole of this sum to Crozat, but I shall take care to deduct the present for you. Charity is but an extravagance, when it is purloined from the wages of the industrious.

As for the other reproach which you make to him, to wit, that of figuring in fine company and having changed his dress, I am sensible of it, Champin, but without joining in it. On considering whence this youth has sprung, and how his condition tends to draw him downward into fellowship with the vagrants of the earth, I am glad to see him look up, and strive to approach the respectable; and in this I see a surety, that, instead of sinking to the bottom, he will keep himself on the surface, supported by the friends whom he will have gained. To confess the truth, it is from seeing him thus tolerated at those dinners and those assemblies, and that he behaves there not like a savage, but as a well-reared person, that I have begun to feel some confidence in his character, and some surety that he will qualify himself for that profession of minister which is the port wherein I hope to see him

cast anchor. It is tending that way to approach the high, without on that account disdaining the low; and having been fearful that, at the outset, the lad would, from his petulance and his unruly instincts, fall into the troubled waters of violence and riot, it is now a security to me to see him, when once introduced into good company, maintain his ground and please there. Overlook these airs, then, since of two rocks he has at least shunned the worst.

I must tell you too, Champin, that I blame you for your behaviour to this schoolmaster who is asking your consent to marry your Catherine, opining that your wishes encroach on what of right belongs to children. It's all very well these corporal-like hectorings which you put on to frighten them; but when you require them to come and live in your lodge, to love each other before your face, to mix up their domestic life with yours, and not to taste the solitude of their own hearth, which is the beloved retreat of young couples, and the covering screen of their caresses, you ask what is unjust, and what cannot be pleasing to honest minds. It is natural instinct, not cunning, that revolts your Catherine and her Goodman; and, as to their mistrust, you must look upon yourself as its first cause. No doubt to see them love each other may perhaps be bitter to you, for this new affection shakes and surpasses the filial which we had won; but you have no just cause to say against it, having gone through the same thing yourself. And besides, we must bow to the will of God, who has for good reasons decreed that love of man and wife should prevail over every other. Leave these young people, then, at liberty; and, where you cannot do anything, give way, that gratitude at least may be left them, and that it may brighten your old days.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

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## LXIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

Geneva.

I SEND you, Louise, the proceeds of a collection which has been wonderfully successful. It was this morning, when we were all assembled in the lecture-room, that the idea of it occurred to me on finding both myself and my companions touched and charmed by the recital of a beautiful piece of poetry, which occurred in our *Belles Lettres* class, and in which the poet lamented, with great talent and sensibility, the imaginary misfortunes of an ideal personage. I was as much affected as the others, until, recalling to mind the Widow Crozat, those beautiful verses appeared to me wretched, and the poet nothing better than a comedian. I wrote in large letters upon a page of my note-book:—

*“You have heard poetry: now listen to prose!”*

*The Widow Crozat lost her husband two years ago, and her youngest son one year after. She had still left a house to shelter, and a son to support her; the fire of last week has devoured both the one and the other. It is in contemplation to build her a cottage. Any contributions will be thankfully received,”* and I signed my name at the foot. As soon as the lecture was over I affixed my sheet of paper to the door. The crowd pressed around to read it. All hearts were softened, all purses opened; and, while I recounted the history in detail, many who had already given, gave a second time, and some who had little or no money about them, went home to procure it. This is true poetry! Such its charm, its influence! Away with the poet and his rhymes! Away with Hippocrene, and the fountain of Castalia, and all those insipid waters, which are not worth a single glass of good *piquette*!!

After to-morrow I shall be able to send you two or three louis-d'ors, which I am expecting with extreme impatience. For only imagine, Louise, that whilst everybody was giving cheerfully according to their means, I was the only one who had not a *liard* to put into the

plate. I fumbled and fumbled in my pocket, like a miser as I am forced to be. If I were to be shipwrecked again, it is my purse, and not your letters, which would float upon the waves. I had some idea of borrowing, but, for three days, it is scarcely worth while.

And this poor woman who talks of earning her bread by spinning! That means, Louise, that if she is left to perish with hunger—under the care of the Almighty! as is the phrase—she would welcome death. Poor creature! Ah! but before she dies of hunger—before she wants either food, shelter, or fuel, or anything which may be necessary to soften her sufferings—I shall no longer have a grain of Algebra in my head, nor a single scrap of bad Greek to sell!

For the rest, Louise, I work from morning till night. Fear has seized upon me, as it did when I fell into the lake; and, without resting, I swim and swim towards the rock. Once safe on land, shall I not caper for joy, and do nothing but enjoy the feeling of existence! M. Dumont will be pleased, I'll warrant; and your father, I hope, not displeased, if I succeed. It is early in April that I appear before my judges. For pity's sake, do not talk to me of these gentle breezes, of this bursting foliage, of this returning life which animates the flowers. The bare idea of them makes me waver; these breezes cool my ardour; this herbage and these flowers rivet my eyes upon their beauties, and my books have not the power to bring them back again. Far rather help me to bar up my cage against the assaults of these first rays of the spring, whose radiance and sweetness subdue my courage, and threaten to send my strongest resolutions after your four domains—after the “snows of by-gone years.”

Then as to the tongs. But what a wicked question, Louise, and how you ridicule, although so sweetly, your unfortunate hermit! Well, yes, I must confess it. One hour after the departure of my letter, no longer able to keep to my resolution, I opened my cupboard and took out my tongs. But listen: it was only because I discovered that I could not meditate if I did not stir the fire, and that I could not stir the fire without meditat-



ing. Besides, these warm breezes came, my fire was extinguished, and thenceforth my conversion has been entire and without a single relapse.

All your wishes are mine also, Louise, and since you desire that I should speak this porter fair, I shall apply myself to the task. As for pleasing him, I will endeavour to do so, although I know, beforehand, that it is an impossibility. Judging from the repugnance which I feel towards him, he must hate me. He both despises and is jealous of me. He envies me every advantage I enjoy beyond what my birthright gives me.—But I will speak him fair, I will please him, Louise, if in endeavouring to do so, I give you the least gratification.

YOUR CHARLES.

#### LXIV.

CHAMPIN TO REYBAZ.

*Geneva.*

THERE is your plan, which I return, old one, approved and commented upon by the skilful. I have shown it to Father Ledrey, who thinks the castle not dear at the price named; only he recommends to you to look sharp to the building of it, lest Lamèche should economise upon the work, and you should find, some fine morning, the lady of the mansion buried under her flat tiles. Your son-in-law sent you yesterday a rouleau; they say the De la Cours have given a thousand florins. Since money is plenty, make at least a close house, where Goody Crozat need not shiver as I do, like a candle in a lantern without glass.

The poor woman is very unhappy, no doubt, having lost her boy; but for the rest she has no cause to fret. In this country there is nothing like a good disaster to set you on your feet. Have but four sous and not know where to get your dinner, and nobody will bother their head about you. Are you not alive so long as you are not starved to death! But let Heaven send you a swingeing calamity, or even a misfortune that makes a stir, and, whisk!—your galleons come in from the four corners of the canton!

Let Crozat therefore be of good cheer. Besides, the students are taking the matter up; and though these gentry have not paid me for my broken glass, it is not for want of the stuff, God be praised! They are stingy only with those that they owe money to. It is your youth who has thrust them into this affair by means of a doleful bill which he posted up on the door of their hall. As for his present, it came this morning; whence I conclude that you have given him a set down, since, at the same time, he has sent off his lacquey and dropped his lofty airs, to chat familiarly with me. I see by this that your son-in-law is just like my wooer: so long as the noose is not tied, he is afraid of his father-in-law. For the rest, I received him neither well nor ill, since his gift like his sweet airs does not come from himself, and since it is you I am to thank for the windfall.

I send you also my rouleau for Dame Crozat; it is a quarter of a dollar which I screwed out of the two old ladies up above. They will have enough left to live upon—will they not? I talked to them nevertheless in a way that would have melted the heart of a milestone; but look you! your Crozat is not of the sect, and they keep all their charity for their babes of grace; so that let a drunkard only patter his creed and declare that he feels grace, and the good man may drink his bellyful. Why! your Crozat, with three words and one grain of common sense—chastened as she is by the Almighty, and wrapped in her sable weeds—might draw from them wherewithal to create for herself a heaven upon earth! She would but have to acknowledge herself a sinner in Adam—that is what they like; she would but have to leave her pastor in the lurch—that is what they are fond of; and then go and join them, and bleat in their gamut. Ah! the good lamb she would be then! Ah! the poor lamb! the dear lamb!—still a sinner in Adam, mark you, but lovely in Israel, having her rest already prepared for her in the heavenly Jerusalem, and sure of being canonized here below in their little books, as they do all the strumpets who take themselves up, and all the devils that turn hermits!

But listen to this. There is among them a sect who

make it their business to circulate the Bible, and who, I imagine, are encouraged by the printers and booksellers. These folks are fond enough of the kingdom of God so long as it affords them the means of living and faring sumptuously. These biblicals fling Testaments at your head, whosoever you be—Arab or pork butcher, Tungoose or stocking-weaver; they cannot sleep, they cannot live, unless their Testaments go off, unless their thirty-six thousand committees report to them how mankind, after swallowing during the year Testaments by bales, by cargoes, by mountains, are still athirst and lolling out the tongue. Then these kind biblicals draw their purse-strings anew, and shower it down upon you in all forms and sizes. Which will you have?—there it is. Mankind lets them go on, and they rub their hands, declaring that the kingdom of God is at the door. Meanwhile the converts sell you their Bible and send the money down their throats: witness Roulier, who lends money on pledge. Last year a descent was made on her little establishment; the back room was crammed with copies of the Holy Scriptures which were there in pawn, while my jovial fellows were keeping up the kingdom of God at the public-house.

But I am travelling away from your letter, which I intended to answer. So much for the plan. So my advice displeased you, ancient? Kick it aside! You don't like my expressions, eh? Consider them as unsaid. Your Louise is a chaste damsel? Granted. But after all, if a cat may look at a king, a gentleman may surely ogle a saint. You want a novice for her husband? Light your lantern, my old boy. Search, search. Put on your barnacles. I am afraid that your chaste lass will fade, before you find one who has not played a prank or two. That in which your notable is to be preferred to another, is, that all his are known and may be reckoned up; whence it is evident that, for one of his condition, they are a mere bagatelle.

So much for your second point. As for the third, namely, your son-in-law, who is thrusting himself among the great folk, plume yourself on it at your good pleasure. Besides, he is not the only one who rubs skirts with the

quality; and if he climbs with more ardour, it is because he starts from a lower ground; if he tricks himself out more, it is because he has more to conceal. But, Reybaz, do not mistake—'tis not himself, but his smart dress that rubs against those grandees. Pranked out as he is, and on condition that he hides the mud picked up in your court, they tolerate him, as you say; but, let him strive to scratch his foundling's skin ever so little against their tip-top flesh, and you will soon see how much that surface is worth by the ell upon which you reckon to support him. The surface fittest for stones, Reybaz, is the bottom of the water. The rank fittest for foundlings is below that of all lawful children, down to the very lowest; and none can kick against it—neither friend, nor patron, nor gods, nor Olympus!

There is one more article, viz. that of my sheep-face, for whom you wish me to spare the solitude of the fire-side, that he may caress my Catherine. Never fash at that! I have just come down a peg and signed the articles. The chap shall have his own hearth and his own chamber where he shall do as he pleases, unseen, by me; and, as for gratitude, I hold him quits for that. Let them pay me for board, and coo away to their heart's content. Filial affection?—all smoke, Reybaz. It's all very well as long as the brat sucks, as long as the hungry urchin howls for bread, and even as long as the bird has not a nest to shelter it at night; but only let the day for billing and shifting for themselves arrive, and good-bye to father and mother: the filial bird flies off as fast as wings can carry it, and you see that all this affection was a mere farce. You say truly that this hour is a bitter one, even for those best prepared. A daughter swept away from you, body and soul, by that pirate! A creature who kept you company by the fireside, who cheered your old age! This bough lopped off, what will be left of the tree but a branchless log, a 'oare stump! Did God will that it should be so? Very fine indeed!

Your affectionate

CHAMPIN.



## LXV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

YOUR rouleau, Charles, acquired in so happy and animated a way, has arrived, together with some other offerings from other quarters. The sum total is now sufficient for the expense of the building, even without selling the wedding necklace. Thus the Widow Crozat will have a roof to shelter her. But how slight a relief is this to her sorrow, and how powerless are the utmost efforts of pity and benevolence to soften an affliction of this nature! This poor woman knows all that has been done for her; she sees this money arrive; she sees my father actively engaged in her affairs; but she beholds everything with perfect indifference, and barely a few words escape from her lips to mark her gratitude towards so many kind people, who nevertheless confer no real benefit on her. M. Prevère himself, who offers her consolations of another and a higher nature, is scarcely listened to. It seems as if this poor creature, once so religious and so good, on account of being thus stricken had lost her confidence in God, and as if all that is told her of his goodness and his justice, was but an empty sound which falls upon her ear, without penetrating to her heart. She neither weeps nor laments; she neither refuses nor asks for anything; but she looks like a being isolated in the midst of the universe, without a fellow-creature to assist, or a Providence to guide her. Some one lent her a wheel, and she immediately began to spin. When I spoke to her of you, she answered calmly, "Louis loved him!" and then she was silent, leaving me to proceed without further interruption. Ah, Charles! how just and true were your feelings when you experienced that chill, that distaste for those rhyming sorrows, which, with all their ornament and display, can at the utmost excite but a slight and passing emotion! Ah! how false is poetry, and how eloquent is the reality! How eloquent is this poor peasant woman, labouring at her spinning, in un-

broken silence, with a bleeding heart, and thinking herself forsaken of heaven and abandoned to the assaults of a malignant fate! Ah! how this mute spectacle of despair makes us suffer, and how painful it is to feel so powerless to afford her consolation!

But I do not wish to distress you, nor, above all, to distract your thoughts from your studies. God and the course of time will restore peace to the roof of this poor afflicted woman. I am truly rejoiced to know that you are so animated with ardour, and so strong in resolution, in pursuing your studies. It is thus that you will reach your rock, and if you triumph; I shall triumph also! Our hearts understand each other, Charles—our souls are united. I feel this with inexpressible delight, and every day more and more; and when, to gratify me, you sacrifice your prejudices against my father's friend, I feel my tender regard for you augmented by the sweet charm of gratitude!

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Your LOUISE.

## LXVI.

MONSIEUR PRÉVÈRE TO MONSIEUR DERVEY.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE recourse to you, my dear colleague, in the hope that you can procure me a piece of information to which I attach considerable value. Do you know, or can you learn through the medium of your connexions, and without any one suspecting the motive of your curiosity, whether the De la Cours intend to return to our neighbourhood this summer, or whether, on the contrary, as it is rumoured, they propose making a tour through the cantons, and remaining for a time at Interlaken? My reason for wishing to know this, is in order that I may, in appointing a time for Charles's return to the parsonage, choose an opportunity when Madame De la Cour is from home. I am aware that they are exposed to the liability of meeting at Geneva; but there it is only seldom, and under circumstances not likely to provoke either rivalry or collision between them. But here I should not have

the same security, if I saw them together—both unoccupied, both engrossed with the same object, under the eyes of the villagers, and perhaps influenced by their remarks.

I know from good authority that M. Ernest has not abandoned the hope of obtaining Louise's hand, and that he persuades himself that time will turn the scale in his favour—above all, as long as M. Reybaz is bound only by a verbal promise which, not being known publicly, may be the more easily revoked. It is on this account, that, notwithstanding the many opposing reasons, I would feel inclined to hasten the period of its announcement. Then the position of Charles and Louise would be clearly established and understood, and M. Ernest's vague hopes and expectations would, I trust, be at an end. He must entertain, moreover, a very erroneous opinion of Louise if he cherishes the slightest hope. She may never belong to Charles, but I cannot imagine that she would ever give her hand to another, and least of all to him. One thing which Charles does not know, and which I think it is better for him to remain in ignorance of, is, that M. Ernest has made his appearance here twice during the last fortnight. He came on horseback as if merely for a ride, and on seeing M. Reybaz, which he did either by chance or design, he affected to meet him with a good grace, without making any allusion to what had passed. He called on, and was particularly civil to, those of our country people who are the most intimate with M. Reybaz, and he placed in my hands (in addition to a former donation from his mother of four hundred florins) the sum of six hundred florins in his own name for the poor Widow Crozat. It is possible that all these proceedings are not intended to cloak any ulterior view, but I scarcely dare to hope this; and I fear the worst, so well aware am I of Charles's imprudence, and that M. Reybaz is so much disposed to judge him with severity. ●

Will you then, my dear colleague, not lose sight of my request, and write me a few words when you have obtained any certain information.

Your affectionate

PREVERE.

## LXVII.

## CHAMPIN TO REYRAZ.

*Geneva.*

I PARTED from you, ancient, with a tear in my eye. I have got over it. After all, life is short; and to weep because the world turns round, is wasting time. I have swallowed the bitter dose, and 'tis done with. Let them love one another; let them increase, let them multiply; I will stand godfather, if they like, for their fifteenth. Finally, this cross between my sheepface and a Champin will produce an excellent amalgam; much like the Limousin with the Norman. So let us be happy, betide us what will!

Besides, what have I to tell you? Now the affair is settled and the board arranged for, I discover that my wooer is a very good fellow after all. It was fear that made him stupid. Now that he is sure of his game, the chap is becoming jovial visibly to the naked eye, and ventures already to slap me on the shoulder and to call me papa father-in-law; while he is so brisk with Catherine that I am obliged to cry, "Halt, there! papa son-in-law!—when shall we have the wedding?" He wants a regular smasher—ball and gala, wine and music!—so that the folks will talk of it till the next jubilee.\* That's the sort for me!

"Alas! it is a point decreed,  
That during this poor, transient life  
Man cannot twice the altar seek,  
Unless he lose the previous wife!  
Then let us marry, marry,  
Marry then, I say!  
Marry, marry,  
The bells shall chime away!  
Quick! quick! lads, drain your glasses,  
And chose your pretty lasses,  
For list! the fiddlers play!"

\* Anniversary of the Reformation at Geneva, which is celebrated every hundred years.



Ha! how stoutly they trolled out that *refrain* at Deneriaz's wedding! We should be there still, I verily believe, but for these devils of spouses, who are always in a hurry to douse the table-cloth and to send off the music. For my part, I say, that the wedding is for the guests.

But since our time, Reybaz, the world has gone to the dogs. The good old ways are wearing out. There are still some weddings of the right sort, but they don't keep it up the next day. And the next day with a jolly party is better than the wedding itself. It is the leavings of the feast, but the prime of the company. Each takes the seat he had the day before; the couplets go round, but more lively, more sprightly, for now the guests are all of one brotherhood. You should have seen Lamboteau's, where the day after eclipsed the wedding! Out of thirty-five there were but fifteen, but all of the right sort—wicked, hearty, jovial blades. At five o'clock we were still at table, so that Gambard made the following stanza:—

“ 'Tis Aurora who comes here to give us a look,  
 As Luna is gone for the night,  
 And she wickedly casts in our dear little nook  
 The unwelcome, intrusive day-light.  
 ‘Dence take it!’ I fancy the jealous one said,  
 As she glanced our glad visages o’er,  
 ‘If I cannot dispatch the assembly to bed,  
 I will light them at least to the door!’ ”

Not badly turned that, for an impromptu made at the moment. Thereupon we broke up, joining in chorus till we were a good distance in the street, and, an hour afterwards, each was at his work.

However, I will buckle them next month, when the breath of the first zephyrs begin to blow. What we still want is a place for the wedding. They themselves are balancing between Grange-Canal and Plainpalais. There is a spacious room at both. For my part, I incline to Plainpalais, which is nearer for every one of the guests. Besides, it is near to the cemetery; these strains would cheer up all the mouldy inmates, who lie yawning in their graves. And more than one Reybaz; this devil of a

wedding makes the songs spring up in my brain, as rain does mushrooms:

“When death has stretched me on my bier,  
 How dull I’ll be—how blank my face!  
 And in your shroud, my gossip dear,  
 You’ll make no less your sad grimace.  
 Then since for us the flowery field  
 Her carpet spreads, the fates allow  
 That life can still enjoyments yield—  
 We’ll seize them now! we’ll seize them now!”

I now come to the main point. There can be no wedding without you, old boy. You shall be informed of the day. Get yourself ready; but, above all, no excuse, no refusal, or I shall disown you. It is my Catherine and her pedagogue who send this invitation, but I back it stoutly. Put off your band, leave your psalms at home, and come and bring happiness to this wooer, who pleases you, and to my Catherine, whom you are fond of.

CHAMPIN, JEAN MARC.

## LXVIII.

MONSIEUR DERVEY TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

*General.*

I REGRET, my dear colleague, that I am not able, notwithstanding all my inquiries, to send you any satisfactory information on the subject which you are so much interested in knowing. The fact is, that Madame De la Cour wishes to remove her son; but the latter, who is decided upon returning to your neighbourhood in the spring, has declared against either remaining in the town or taking a tour in the cantons. It is difficult, as you see, to say beforehand which will gain the victory, the mother or the son. Under ordinary circumstances it would assuredly be the latter; but as affairs now stand, Madame De la Cour, having a positive interest at stake, may possibly be less easily influenced than usual. I do not entertain a doubt but that the proceedings of M. Ernest, and his appearance at the parsonage, are designed to conceal some ulterior

object. He wishes to cause the past to be forgotten, and prepare for the future. I should not therefore be greatly surprised, if acting on this system, he should in the end decide upon accompanying his mother on her proposed tour. He is a young man at all times under the influence of his passions, and who, if he has not energy enough to conquer them, is very capable of employing every species of calculation and stratagem for their gratification.

You have taken a very just view, I think, my dear brother, in characterizing as you have done the sentiment with which M. Reybaz's daughter has inspired him. The charms of that young person are doubtless great, but it appears to me that they shine with a brighter lustre from being found in her own modest condition. The young man, discovering them all at once on emerging from the irregularities of his disordered life, was irresistibly attracted by the purity and beauty of this young girl, and led on by the hope of success which his position in life made him look upon as certain. He appears to be the more deeply interested that he himself is held in less consideration, and that Mademoiselle Louise is more respected. His pride has been aroused and become involved in his success; the humiliation of seeing her preference for Charles still farther irritates his passion; and all these circumstances, which I have learned from my connexion with the Du Puech family, justify your fears and your prudential measures. His alliance with that family was only the question of a moment: his manner towards Mademoiselle Du Puech soon put an end to all ulterior proceedings.

Hasten, then, the announcement of this engagement, that Charles's position may be clearly understood. Notwithstanding the secrecy which has been enjoined respecting this affair, M. Reybaz's engagement is suspected. His friend, our porter here, who is not famed for discretion, is, I believe, informed of the affair; and it appears to me that both the young man and Mademoiselle Louise are thus placed in a false position, which cannot be otherwise than injurious to them. Moreover, it is very evident that if any circumstance could encourage M. Ernest's hopes, and tend to bring about any collision between the two

young men, it would certainly be the mystery which still surrounds M. Reybaz's intentions, and especially Mademoiselle Louise's own consent. If once these intentions were proclaimed in open day, what pretence could M. Ernest offer to the world for persisting in his rivalry—even now so absurd in the eyes of those who know the real state of affairs? M. Reybaz ought to be aware of all this himself; and, if his consent is really sincere, he should accede to your desire.

Our young friend is at this moment excessively busy; he brings to his studies all that generous ardour which imparts such a charm to his character. The result is that we enjoy less of his company. This to us is a sensible privation, as his presence is a never-failing source of life and animation to our circle, which, when reduced to its original number, is calm and quiet enough. I am aware that Charles and M. Ernest met recently at the house of Madame Domergue: they did not speak to each other, but Madame De la Cour gave Charles a most gracious reception. I have reason to believe that the latter is entirely ignorant of M. Ernest's new proceedings and his visits to the parsonage; and you may readily believe that, as far as I am concerned, he will still remain so. For the rest, I shall be made acquainted with Madame De la Cour's arrangements as soon as they are determined upon, and I shall immediately hasten to inform you respecting them. Receive, my dear brother, the assurances of the friendship of your affectionate

DERVEY..

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## LXIX.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

DARE I venture to knock at your door, Master Hermit? It is to inquire after your health, and also to say that, if people admire your studious ardour, they cannot accommodate themselves, contentedly, to your silence. These last two weeks have appeared very long ones to me. But



I have no wish to complain; my father, besides, thinks that you have just hit upon the exact proportion of letter-writing which he desires and approves.

*A propos*, your neighbour Champin is about to marry his daughter (you did not mention a word of it), and has invited my father to the wedding. It is possible that you may have received an invitation also; in which case you ought perhaps to accept it, if only out of respect to my father, and not to appear to disdain the society of a class which, though it may not be that in which you have now entered, is not the less our own. Were you to refuse on account of your antipathy against M. Champin, he would not fail to think and to say that you despised him; and certainly you would feel sorry to furnish him with such a pretext. I am in the vein of moralizing, Charles; and I assure you I feel some anxiety on finding how much I am inclined to it. This is a fault, it is said, which is sure to increase, and which ends in making women insupportable. I must watch myself carefully, and you must reprove me, if you please, whenever you see occasion. This is the only way, moreover, in which we can be quits.

My father requests that you will go to the silversmith whose address I enclose, and order a silver cover at the price of sixty florins; exactly like the one he sent to my father five years ago on the marriage of his god-daughter. He wishes it to be marked with the initials of *Catherine Champin*. My father requests that the workmanship may be good, and the cover thick and massive rather than beaten out into a large surface. When it is ready, you will be kind enough to call for it, and lock it up in your press (taking away the key), until the proper moment arrives for its presentation.

The poor Widow Crozat remains very nearly in the same state. They are making preparations for building, and have already levelled the ground and begun to dig the foundations. One thing gives me great pleasure, and that is, that there is a person who will remove the remains of the former building at the price of old materials, so that these melancholy mementoes will soon disappear. We have, moreover, received fresh contributions; so that,

without selling the cow, there will be sufficient means to defray the expense of erecting the new cottage. In consequence of this, my father requests you to limit yourself to your former donation, and to keep your in-coming fees for some future occasion.

I have said all that I had to say, Master Hermit; and I close the door gently, not without making you a most respectful obeisance.

LOUISE.

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LXX.

THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

*The Parsonage.*

It is not the world that has gone down-hill, Champin; it is we who have got up in years. Those young folks about you are what we were once, and are travelling onward to the point at which we have arrived—except that may God preserve them from being separated from one another, to grow old in widowhood!

As for you, Champin, though you are my senior, you do not appear so. You still keep up the memory of the good old ways, and have a light heart along with them. Your head is yet full of the jollities of past banquets; and for every subject you have a song to suit. It is my opinion that you will live to be old; for that which shortens our days is heaviness of soul, and that gloom in which sorrow envelopes it. Yours is light, ever out of doors, and illumined, as it were, by bright sunshine: all its tears are soon dried up. Heaven has bestowed on you a happy lot, Champin, and a much better one than if it had given you that wealth which you covet.

I am sorry, ancient, that I cannot join in your mirth—but I feel that this jollity to which you invite me is no longer suitable for me. It is now twenty-one years since I was at a wedding-feast, which, ever since the death of Theresa, I have had no mind to. The sight of young people being united, is dear to me, at a distance; and I send to

your Catherine my best wishes. But, near at hand, I find matter for reflections, the bitterness of which stifles all mirth; and even at my Louise's, should it happen to be a joyous wedding, and numerous in guests, I have more than once thought that I would stay away from it. I shall not, then, my old friend, take my seat at your jovial table; and instead of being angry with me for so doing, you owe me thanks for not going to spoil your sport by my grave face.

I have, besides, more to do just now than usual, and to leave home at this moment would suit me ill. They are about the new house for Crozat; and, that the money spent upon it may be well laid out, one must incessantly overlook, incessantly jog, these workmen, who are always inclined to throw down the trowel and to go off for refreshment. Thereupon depends, perhaps, whether Crozat will be able to keep her cow, which would be of great service to her. The poor woman is not at all likely to follow the advice you threw out respecting those mummers. Her religion is of the heart, not of words and professions; I am only afraid, from her appearance, that, stricken so severely, she will give way to inward murmuring. However, before pushing her on that point, we must get her out of that nook in which she has taken shelter, and she must find herself mistress once more, and bustling about her household cares, in the cottage which is preparing for her reception by the autumn. In a fortnight they will be putting on the roof.

Not knowing when I can go to town to compliment your Catherine, I here write (requesting you to give her a reading of them) the wishes that I form from my heart for her prosperity. I trust they may live in concord, fidelity, and affection; and no fear but that, with these, other good things will not be wanting, or, at least, that they will be able to make shift without them. I wish her children, for, wanting them, marriage is without savour; and that she may bring them up in the fear of God, and marry them when the time comes—without heeding, as you see, your tirades against the pirate, or your bitterness of a moment against filial affection. Your daughter loves

you as formerly, Champin, but in another manner; and if she did not love you, her children would one day desert her. Never will a bad daughter be a beloved mother.

RIYBAZ.

## LXXI.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Genoa.*

LOUISE, I can do nothing! These balmy breezes, and this resplendent sunshine, rob me of all my courage. A thousand recollections of the by-gone spring beset my thoughts, and I cannot fix them upon anything but what is connected with you. Compared with that rapturous delight which overflows my heart when thinking of you, all else appears odious to me; and I repulse with disgust this senseless mummary which they call study. Thus the days flow on in a soothing torpor, and the sting of shame which I feel at my conduct is the only thing which prevents me from giving way entirely.

Ah! pity me, Louise! What to me are all the systems of philosophers, the truths of geometricians, the classifications of botanists? What to me are the poets themselves—at least unless they paint the sentiment which I feel, and paint it in the colours of truth? What! when I breathe nothing but tenderness—when, separated from you, I might at least rejoin you in thought, and, in imagination, pass my hours beside you—I must chain myself by force to my note-book—must exchange for that which interests me so little, the only thing which could be the consolation of my exile and the charm of my life!

At times, therefore, all ambition dies within me—the book falls from my hands—I forget who I am and whither I am going—and I abandon myself entirely to these delightful reveries. Like the prisoner in his dungeon, I dream of light and liberty; and, bursting my shackles, I fly towards the flowery bank of some flowing stream—I seat myself by your side—I give myself up to the intoxicating joy of beholding you—and the hours glide past me more rapidly than the stream which murmurs at my feet.



Everything then appears to me enchanting—the light of heaven, the perfume of the flowers, the mystery of the shady groves—and I taste supreme felicity!

From this empyrean heaven how can I descend again to earth?—How resume those manacles which I have shaken off?—How return to the bitter reality—to those labours without charm, without enjoyment, without visible aim?—And yet I must, for the fatal day approaches! Then, when reason resumes her sway, I find myself thus placed between the studies which I have neglected and these chimeras which I have been indulging; regret and self-reproach unite to overwhelm me, and I remain plunged in a state of sorrowful discouragement.

Then, as I have said, I feel the poignant sting of shame; I resolve to overcome my indolence, to retrieve my lost time; I make a great exertion, I open my books, I strive to fasten my attention. But my thoughts are far away, and I must go and search for them on the margin of that stream where I have left them; and it requires all my exertions, all my efforts, and all my vigilance, to prevent them from flying back again every instant. I am obliged to bar the passages, leaving only one open, until they return and settle down upon my philosophical papers. Picture to yourself a flock of sheep who are rushing towards verdant pastures, and whom the inexorable crook of the shepherd forces back upon a wretched stony pavement.

Laugh at me, Louise, if you will, but pity me. Philosophy! do you know what the word means? A chaos of principles, of abstractions, of deductions, of syllogisms.—What a pasture for my poor sheep! They will soon refuse it with disgust.

I put them out to graze. It is on Botany. For example, *bractea*, *stomata*, *spongioles*, *anthers*, *ovaries*, *cotyledons*. You ask what all these are. These are flowers. This is their arrangement. Ah! I turn my eyes with a groan towards my little sucker. Can it be true that this charming rose, planted by Louise's hand, is nothing more than a scientific assemblage of these grotesque ingredients? Where, then, is the grass of the field,

with its sweet savour and its gentle perfume? As for this, my sheep turn away and will not crop it.

After this I bring them to painting. This is a black board on which I trace, with my chalk, signs and figures, and regale my flock with the binomial quantities of Newton or the delights of the hypothennuse. Whilst I am drawing, rubbing out, and drawing over again, first one escapes, then two, then the whole flock in a file. I run after them.—For the last hour they have been sporting around their young shepherdess.

This, Louise, is a faithful history of the manner in which I spend my days; and a long punishment it is, I assure you. The country attracts me; the fields, the flowers, the trees, call me; and I flutter mournfully against the bars of that cage which you are pleased to call a hermitage!

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## LXXII.

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*Geneva.*

At last, Louise, the fatal day has arrived. I have passed my examination. It was yesterday, though I concealed it from you. Here I am safely through this ordeal; and, if I have succeeded, you must attribute it to the indulgence of my judges as well as to the easy nature of the subject. But I passed through some very strange emotions.

I assure you that, on the first occasion at least, the ceremony is not a gay one; but I will describe it to you. My time had arrived, and they came to seek me. My comrades besieged my apartment: "It is your turn now!—it is your turn now!" they all cried out at once; at the same time deafening me with a world of superfluous advice. "Such a passage has been already asked, and you will have such another.—Gases, conic sections, Bentham, the incomplete systems, the quadrumani, the facial angle—" Think what I must have felt with all these ingredients mixed up in my brain, making a hideous confusion, and throwing me into a state of complete bewilderment. "It is a perfect certainty," thought I, as I ran to the scene of action, "that I shall mix up the gases with the systems, and the quadrumani with the conic sections." And I arrived quite out of breath at the vestibule, which was thronged with young men—part of them having passed the tribunal, others waiting to take their turn, and all speaking at the same moment.

In the midst of this Babel of tongues, the clock struck. That clock, Louise! Besides, the sound of a clock striking always makes me tremble, ever since the one which awoke me in the church. The door opens, and I pass with the crowd into a large hall, in which fear at first prevented me from seeing a single object. I proceed to take my place upon the bench. Scarcely am I seated when I perceive a stout gentleman among the audience who makes a sign of encouragement to me: it was M. Dumont. I was only the more afraid of mixing up Bentham with the quadrumani.

This hall is hung all round with green cloth (which has rather disgusted me with the verdure of the fields), and moreover has an air of gloom from the lofty trees which surround it, and the towers of St. Peter's which intercept the light of heaven. I had in front of me my judges—they are the Academy. Picture to yourself a dozen gentlemen dressed in black, with grave countenances, some of them napping, others taking snuff, others whispering together, and each of them wearing in my eyes the appearance of a Minos of the infernal regions passing

sentence on the shades of the dead, in full dress. Moreover, when people are frightened, everything assumes a sinister appearance to them. Against the wall, over the rector's chair, was hung an antique portrait of Calvin. Calvin, with his attenuated figure, his piercing eye, his black cap, his black gown, his forefinger lifted up, doubtless at me—pointing me out to general attention, threatening me with excommunication, with banishment to the infernal regions, if I should happen to make a single mistake, as I was so much afraid of doing.

The scene opened. One of the professors interrupted what he was saying for the sole purpose of asking me a question. I was completely taken by surprise, although I ought to have expected nothing else, and I remained stupified and absolutely incapable of making the least reply. Unbroken silence—Calvin threatening. I felt so ill at ease, so embarrassed, so ready to assume any other expression in the stead of that which I then wore, that the idea flashed across my mind of bursting into a laugh, or melting into tears, to get myself out of the scrape. "Sir," said my professor to me, "it appears to me—" Scarcely had he uttered these words when I went off like a peal of bells. He stopped, and I ran through the whole thread of my discourse, like a machine, or like a chime of bells, I repeat, which will sound every stroke to the very last, in spite of all the world, however wearying it may be, however much the hearers may curse its pertinacity—and then I stopped suddenly.

I was very much abashed at my success; it had, however, this good effect, that being now relieved from the greater portion of my embarrassment, I was better able to reflect upon what I was saying, and not to pour forth my words like a mere parrot. I therefore collected all my forces for the next essay; and when the second question was put to me, accompanied by a friendly look from M. Dumont, I was prepared to receive it. You must understand that the subject was the Utilitarians—that school of which Bentham is the chief, M. Dumont the apostle, and our professor the adversary. A piquant situation, was it not, Louise? Ah! but now I was as

bold as a lion, and Calvin did not frighten me a whit more or less than the time-piece. I explained the system clearly to the satisfaction of both parties—that is to say, of M. Dumont and the professor. Then came the decision on the merits. Here it was no longer possible to please one without displeasing the other. I decided according to my convictions, and attacked right and left, with all the power that I could command, as well with such weapons as my note-books could furnish, as with those which I was enabled to forge on the moment for myself, carried away by the interest of the question, and still more by the attention which was paid to my remarks. And see how well I judged! My professor was beside himself with delight, and M. Dumont, putting aside the real merits of the question, which were evidently beyond my powers, encouraged me from time to time with the most flattering and benevolent looks, pleased to witness my courage, to see me unfold my wings, and to answer in some degree to the opinion he had been kind enough to form of me. After this effort of eloquence, the rest was nothing. I got through it, if not with brilliant success, at least with ease, and in the midst of favourable remarks. On leaving the hall, I accompanied M. Dumont home, and you may well believe that I drank in, as heavenly nectar, his slightest words of encouragement. It is certain, Louise, that I possess an alarming amount of self-love. I am ashamed to allow you to see it thus unveiled, but still from self-love again, I do not wish to change it.

But listen to what followed. Alas! I have not yet reached the end. From the summit of my glory, from the height of my seventh heaven, I was dashed down in an instant to the dust. I entered M. Dumont's a great philosopher, the adversary of Bentham, a power of the first rank; I left it a scholar—a confused, bewildered scholar—a mere, buzzing fly—a nothing!—less than nothing! Oh! how I was crushed, humiliated, precipitated in a moment from the height of my triumph!—feeling in my inmost soul the conviction, the horrible conviction, that a successful examination, regularly approved and passed by competent authorities, proves very little indeed!



M. Dumont made me sit down. "Bravo! my boy, I was pleased with you (I thought the expression weak). There was warmth in your attack (I expected he would have said fire, ardent fire), some idea of the subject (oh! oh!) very few absurdities (insupportable!), very little logic too, a great many commonplaces, a thousand times refuted (insolent); but as a young student's thesis (ah! yes, indeed!) it was not bad (a wonderful stretch, truly!)"

Such were his remarks and my reflections. He went on. "Work hard, my young friend, and you may be able in time to grapple with these interesting questions. When you have comprehended them (could you imagine a balder phrase?) you will perceive that they are intimately connected with the highest interests of humanity. It appears to me, from your remarks, that the bent of your inclinations is towards the moral sciences, and it is a good augury for the career you have chosen. Take courage; here is a library entirely at your disposal (more than a thousand volumes, Louise! At this sight, I felt all my taste for the moral sciences evaporate), I offer you my services, my friendship, and shall be happy to see you for dinner every fortnight—on Tuesday." I was profuse in my acknowledgments, which I poured forth freely, for they were warm from my heart; and I took my leave with a number of volumes under my arm.

One thing is certain, viz. that it is a most agreeable thing not to have any more examinations in perspective. I feel myself even more relieved now than I was formerly borne down by this affair. Everybody smiles upon me, everything breathes recreation, pleasure, and I feel that I am now free, and alone with your image. With you I wander—with you I seek the fields, the groves, the shades—and everywhere I experience a fulness of happiness which before was utterly unknown to me. Oh! no, Louise, I no longer regret my childhood. I enjoy now my blessings, although absent, more than I did those in the midst of which my days glided past. Childhood's joys are all centred in the present; but love throws a charm over the past, the present, and the time which is to come. Your image meets me on every side! You are with me everywhere—at every

moment! You are the sole charm of all that I do—of all that I see—of all that I dream of! Sometimes I endeavour to become dejected and anxious, in order to remain in this sober world, and to believe myself merely a mortal; but it is impossible. In vain do I attempt to stem that tide of happiness which flows in upon me from every side!

I shall only be detained here for a few days longer; for it is not expected, I presume, that, for the sake of the few lessons which I am giving, I ought to sacrifice the happiness, so long looked for, of seeing you once more! To see you! The very thought intoxicates me! Ought I to write and request permission to come?—Ought I to wait for M. Prevere's orders, or your father's invitation?—Ought I to set out immediately? In truth, my happiness bewilders me. Deign to guide a poor unfortunate fellow whose brain has been turned by joy.

Adieu, then, for a very short time—a very, very short time—Louise, my only love! Adieu, Louise, my sister in past days, henceforth my bride, at all times my providence! Ah, when I approach my home—when I distinguish first the village, then the parsonage, the spire, the poplars, the pond! When I enter the court-yard and bound across the threshold—when I hear the wooden staircase echoing under my footsteps—Happy journey!—all the day long I accomplish it in thought. Sometimes I meet you at the foot of the meadow, sometimes at the fountain, sometimes alone, sometimes with M. Prevere—and it is thus that I support the affliction of being still separated from you.

CHARLES.

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LXXIII.

MONSIEUR DERVEY TO MONSIEUR PREVERE.

*Geneva.*

I HASTEN to acquaint you, my dear colleague, that the De la Cours are returning to your neighbourhood. After a long struggle and many warm contentions, the young man

has gained the victory. They are already preparing their luggage, and to-morrow, or the day after, they will be at the chateau. Their departure is the subject of general conversation, which tends to make public that engagement which you wished should be kept concealed. In certain circles the name of Mademoiselle Louise is pronounced with a sort of malicious disdain, and the rivalry of the two young men is no longer a mystery. Only, as nothing positive is known respecting the engagement into which M. Reybaz has entered, the opinion prevails that he will not long resist the temptation of so splendid an alliance for his daughter. Hasten, then, to publish the betrothal; it appears to me the only step to be taken. After that nothing more can be said; and M. Ernest may proceed to visit the cantons as soon as he pleases.

Our young friend passed his examination in a brilliant manner, and I have received the most flattering congratulations on his success. My friend Dumont, who was present, augurs very favourably of the young man. Moreover, in consequence of this success, Charles has become an object of general notice. He is already known by the name of M. Prevere's orphan. M. Prevere is the friend of M. Reybaz; M. Reybaz has a daughter distinguished as much by her virtues as the charms of her person—all so many reasons for hastening the announcement of this engagement, and lifting a veil which is so slight as scarcely to conceal that which it affects to hide behind it.

As for Charles, he thinks neither of his success, nor of M. Ernest, nor of these remarks of which he is the subject. At present he is wholly engrossed by one sole thought, that of returning to the parsonage. He speaks of it to us every day, and every moment of the day, and however great our regret at seeing him depart, we join in chorus with him on the justice, the necessity, the urgency, of this delightful journey. I think that you will gratify his wishes. I shorten my letter that I may not lose this opportunity of sending it, as the messenger is waiting.

Your affectionate

DERVEY.

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## LXXIV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

THIS is the case, or never, for the lady of your affections to express to you all her delight! This fatal day, as you call it, you have changed into a delightful *fête*. I am radiant with joy, M. Prevere is very happy, and my father charges me to express to you his satisfaction.

Your letter is charming; but it has interested far more than diverted me. I commiserated your alarms too much to enjoy their comic side. As for M. Dumont's expressions, (which amused M. Prevere highly), they appear to me, with all deference, very encouraging, and the best calculated to inspirit your zeal. Be assured that this testimony of friendship alone, from so distinguished a man, is equivalent to the most honourable opinion of your talents.

And then you speak to me of all sorts of things which I am unable to comprehend. The very terms which you use are unknown to me. How happy you are, you young men! You are taught everything; your mind is directed to a thousand curious and varied subjects; your understanding is enriched with knowledge; and then care is taken to see that you have benefited by your instruction. And we—we, Charles! We do nothing! We are neglected; unworthy doubtless of drinking from such lofty springs. I feel humiliated (for I too have my self-love) to perceive that while you are becoming a scholar I am becoming nothing—although very inquisitive, as you know, and a little jealous into the bargain. But in truth you will soon not know what to say to me, nor I what to answer. Our conversations will come to a stand-still for want of common subjects which we can both comprehend. I am at war with established institutions, at war with the existing customs, and a little also with you. Since we are forbidden all learning, I am almost vexed that there is such a thing as learning on the earth. What vexes me also, is to see that M. Prevere thinks that all this is right. Do you



know what he said to me?—for I confided a little of my ill-humour to him. “It would be a great pity for a woman to occupy herself with such things. She would lose in grace, far more than she could gain by a smattering of knowledge which could be of no use to her. Besides there are more important duties which claim her attention.” Such then is our lot! Now complain of M. Dumont. If he showed you a difficult road, he at least did not bar up the entrance.

These are my subjects of vexation, and so much the more real, that, at the bottom, I doubt that M. Prevere is right. But if so, why did he teach me to love instruction and reading? Why did he permit me to hear it?—to hear it with transport?—me the profane?—me destined to know nothing—to learn nothing? Why have cultivated my intellect?—why have taught me to read—to write? This was to show me the living waters, and to forbid me to cool my parched lips at them. I think the proceeding cruel in the extreme. I said so to him (for we had some arguments upon this point), and then he explained to me that it was all for the best. But the most amusing thing was, that my father, who was present, maintained that I was already a great deal too learned. “For in short,” said he, “she reads books.”

I conclude from all this, that they should have brought me up to tend sheep. The occupation of a shepherdess is more suitable to this state of ignorance in which we are kept, than that of a young lady. And yet it is a vocation that has sadly deteriorated since the golden age, or else merely since the shepherdesses of Florian. Do you remember Estelle? Do you remember when we used to devour those pages, so full of falsehood to older heads, so lifelike with truth to our childish imaginations? Have you forgotten the wild delight with which we roamed through that pastoral world? Lovely shepherdesses, with complexions so fair in spite of the sun!—with dresses so spotless notwithstanding the stable!—with language so elegant without either schools or Lancasters! But is it not a pity, Charles, that there are no longer such things? Why is the world not made so? How coarse and common-

place everything has become, and how the sheep, when they think of it, must regret that happy era of their history!

The book fell into my hands the other day. Shall I confess it?—it no longer gave me any pleasure! It recalled to my mind our reading it together—but the charm which then invested it was gone. I could almost have wept. Can it be true that everything which delights us must thus disappear? Does the imagination die with our early years? Are we unceasingly advancing towards stern and forbidding realities? Oh, how I long to retain these enchanting illusions—to feel once more the charm which we tasted in these childish stories! No, Charles, I cannot, with you, speak ill of our childhood. These pleasures were pure, lovely, lifelike. They were sufficient to deck the present in the softest and most smiling colours. Real, immense loss! For my part if I love the present, I regret the past; and, as for the future, I know not well what to say of it. Every day it comes nearer, bringing little, but taking something away; and I am less grateful for its gifts than grieved at its robberies.

Florian being out of favour with me, I have returned to Paul and Virginia. My father, who is not fond of sorrowful histories, had hid the book; but Martha found it for me again, and on Monday I took my little volume, and seated myself under the oaks at Chevron. Here, I acknowledge, the charm had not vanished as from the Pastorals of Florian. This world is at once far more full of poetry and of truth. I do not speak of that beautiful Isle of France, of which I know nothing, and which, nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that I have seen. I speak of those scenes of sentiment, so pure, so true; I speak of that freshness of colouring, of that style which steals gently over the heart, until it has, as it were, steeped it in sweet and soothing melancholy. I shall never read the end again, it is too poignant, but I return without ceasing to the commencement, which paints innocence in such attractive colours. I enjoy the early and happy days of these two children better when I know beforehand the fate which awaits them. One day, Madame De la Cour, observing the delight I took in this little

poem, sent me *Atala*. "It is in the same style," said she, "but better written and more modern." I have not compared them, not feeling myself qualified to do so, but I cannot understand how any one could think of making a comparison. Have you read it?

What is it then that educated people mean by "well written" or "ill written?" for that is the judgment which I always hear pronounced by Madame De la Cour on the new works which she receives. I imagine sometimes that it refers to the elegance of the phrases; sometimes I fancy she speaks of the matter, the construction, the thoughts, of that which pleases or wearies; and amidst so many different meanings I am at a loss which to fix on. To write well—that is to say, to write things like these, which attract all hearts, which captivate so many people—this appears to me a truly heavenly pleasure! What a glorious triumph!—but, above all, what delightful moments spent in thus creating these amiable beings, and living in the midst of such attractive fictions! I can see but one drawback; and that is, that on awakening from these delightful dreams, one must find the world a very dull and melancholy dwelling. LOUISE.

P.S.—Here I have given you a whole budget of gossip, Charles, and have not yet answered the questions with which you conclude your letter. The reason was, that I wished to reconcile you to postscripts. You must understand, then, that your old mode of life is to commence again. It is M. Prevère who has decided so, but I wished to be the first to tell you of it. He thinks that you have merited, by your fatigue and labour of the past winter, a few weeks of repose—and I think so too. He reproaches himself that since we have become so happy we have not yet met together to enjoy our common concord and felicity—and I reproach myself for it too. He asserts that your presence will be to me a source of the sweetest joy, to my heart a long *fête*, to my days and weeks a dear and sweet enlivener—and I took good care not to contradict him! Am I not a docile pupil? Ah! Charles, I have somewhere told you that I know not how to be

happy! Blot out that line!—throw the falsehood into the fire! How all is changed! It will now require more effort for me to conceal my happiness from you than I formerly required to hide the anxiety with which I was agitated. Joy, security, tenderness—which render every surrounding object lovely—are now the only sentiments which employ my hours; and when I think of the weeks which are to come, I am almost tempted with you to abuse that past, which, so short a time ago, I still regretted.

The day for your coming to us is not yet fixed, but M. Prevere will let you know soon.

Your LOUISE.

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## LXXV.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO MONSIEUR DERVEY.

*The Parsonage.*

I THANK you for your advice, my dear colleague, although it has thrown me into great perplexity. The return of this family to the neighbourhood completely thwarts the plan I had formed of bringing Charles here to pass the summer with us. I had sent him word, before the receipt of your letter, that I would in a short time fix the day for his return; and, behold, here he is waiting for the fulfilment of this promise at the very moment when I regret deeply that I made it.

I think with you that the best means of extricating ourselves from this situation, which is as difficult as it is singular, is immediately to publish the announcement; and if the matter had depended upon me, it would have been done already; but I have great difficulty in inducing M. Reybaz to determine upon it. He opposes me with very rational motives, which are also those in which we were formerly agreed; without my being able to disclose the true reasons which have induced me to change my opinion, or to run the risk, in insisting upon it too strongly, of making him believe that I doubt his good faith in keeping his promises. Nevertheless, I still hope to succeed in obtaining his consent; and my greatest embarrassment at the present moment is how to keep



Charles in town until I have succeeded in doing so. Pray tell him that we are making preparations to receive him, and that in a few days he shall receive his order of recall.

It is now no longer a matter of doubt that M. Ernest's conduct and proceedings are designed to conceal some latent project; and that he still hopes to accomplish his purpose by gaining time, and by displaying himself under the most favourable point of view. The family arrived at the chateau the day before yesterday, and this morning he presented himself at the parsonage as if nothing had occurred. His demeanour was proper and polite, and to Louise he was friendly without being too marked in his attentions; nevertheless, it was evident he was obliged to keep a strict watch over himself, in order that nothing either in the expression of his countenance or his language might betray the sentiment which fills his heart, and which his reserve and the looks he kept constantly fastened on Louise, made sufficiently manifest. The fire at Widow Crozat's furnished the subject of their conversation; and it was *à propos* of the situation of this poor woman, that he put himself in communication with M. Reybaz and myself, without neglecting to secure a pretext for the repetition of his visits. Louise, who is unacquainted with his last proceedings and ignorant of his present views, received him as usual; and he even pushed his hypocrisy so far as to ask news of Charles, though without dwelling upon the subject, as you may well believe. As for Madame De la Cour, she has not yet made her appearance; and I am determined, if I cannot obtain the consent of M. Reybaz to the publication of the announcement, to call on her myself, to make known to her the engagement entered into by M. Reybaz, and to inform her son, through her agency, and in my own name, that the part which he is playing is as little calculated to further his views as it is disgraceful to his character.

The report had spread here that the De la Cours did not intend to return this summer, and their sudden arrival has, consequently, excited surprise and aroused

anxiety. It seems, too, as if M. Ernest was not disinclined to supply a sort of equivocal support to this feeling, since, without any apparent cause, or any proceedings on our part which might have led to the subject, there have appeared in the hamlet some movements, and remarks have been circulated, which evince on the part of those using them an intention of acting indirectly on M. Reybaz's determination. Fortunately the latter, besides being loved and respected by all the peasants, who will not fail to approve and support him the moment he makes his intentions publicly known, does not afford any hold to these stealthy attempts; but pursues undeviatingly his straight-forward course, without looking towards any other object than Charles. If Charles, who has gained in this year on his esteem, continue to inspire him with a feeling of security, before the end of another, M. Reybaz will have forgotten the stain upon his birth; and he will at last see in this youth, what he has so much difficulty in seeing, an excellent disposition, an honest heart in the right place, and those qualities of character, which are of all others the most suitable to secure the happiness of his Louise. May God protect him!

You take so sincere an interest in this young man, my dear brother, that I abandon myself with pleasure to the task of conversing with you respecting him, being well assured that you will listen to me with patience and perhaps with pleasure. Accept, I entreat, the expression of my gratitude and friendship.

PREVERE.

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## LXXVI.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva.*

UNDECEIVE yourself, Louise; you have not reconciled me in the least to postscripts. The last sentence of your letter chains me to this place. The term of my exile has not yet arrived; and when I had made all my arrangements for taking my flight either to-night or to-morrow, here

am I compelled to wait until they have fixed the day. Fixed the day! But, good Heaven, is not one day as good as another for me to wend my way to the parsonage upon my own two legs? Has my bed been sold and my chamber dismantled? But let that be no hinderance. In comparison with this cage, the barn would appear to me a palace, and the hay of the loft a royal bed of down.

But no, I love these postscripts. Does not yours contain some of the most adorable lines? Ah, Louise! so then hope, joy, nay, even happiness, visit your heart! Anxiety has fled, the present smiles upon you, the future is serene!—words that add to my felicity the sole, the only charm which was wanting to complete it! Let me not complain then; let me wait with patience; and let me in the mean time live with you in thought. My time is now all my own, and I intend to write you volumes; but will you have either the time or the inclination to read them? I shall first answer your letter, in which you propound sentiments which fill me with indignation.

What, Louise!—you more learned, you other than what you are? God forbid! And besides, are you so ignorant of yourself? Learned? You are so, in all that is amiable and charming to know. Learned? You are so, in grace and sentiment! Learned? You are so, infinitely more than your humble servant, great philosopher as he was for a whole quarter of an hour. He admires your lines; it is all he can do fully to comprehend you; and your questions embarrass him greatly. I tell you what is meant by the “well-written” and “ill-written?” Why, for what do you take me? It is *you* rather who should teach *me*. “Well written” is as you write—I know nothing more.

Wait a little, however. It is true that I have been studying rhetoric. But in rhetoric the harangues are always those which it is considered necessary to write. You must attend to the *demonstrative*, the *deliberative*, and the *judicial*, as well as to the *synecdoche* and the *metalepsis*—Am I not very learned? Here are words which I defy you to comprehend, and which I shall take good care not to explain; in the first place because I wish to

preserve my superiority, and secondly because you would laugh to see what sort of things they signify. Would you imagine that they call carrots *daucus staphtlinus*. Wonderful! grand! learned! Yet they are carrots and nothing else. So much for my *metalepsis*. Believe me, Louise, that many people are learned in this sort of knowledge, who are not learned in yours.

Shall I write harangues? I know not; but at all events I have my receipt all ready to harangue according to rule. Only give me a popular assembly—a thousand men or so to address—Romans if possible—and I will admonish them in the most orthodox style in the world, according to Cicero and Quintilian. That is what I have been taught in the matter of style and composition, and rhetoric is nothing more. But give me the slightest subject to discuss, or a mere note to write, and I am at a dead stand. I don't know what to do with my *deliberative*, and I find that my *metalepsis* does not assist me much. I feel that here the *exordium* is out of season, that the *narration* is decidedly out of place, and I am compelled to fall back upon my own resources—very much humiliated to find that they are no resources at all. And you, Louise—you who can express yourself with so much ease—you who wield a pen so prompt to follow every thought with grace and freedom—you wish to be more learned! And you address yourself to me to enable you to become so? Only give me a question or two on the *synecdoche*.

In the moral sciences (that is my *forte* you know) I am just as far advanced. I know the names of the systems, and the names of their authors. Descartes, Leibnitz, Plato, are not unknown to me; I have seen their faces somewhere; and that is the bulk of my pack with regard to moral sciences. As for their ideas, I am completely puzzled; the bearing of these ideas escape me totally; a conviction in favour of the one or the other of these systems is as foreign to me as what is passing in the moon—sum total, I know as much about it as I do of alchemy. Withal quite ready to support one or other, at your choice; ready to repeat from memory both the objection and the refutation; like those who say mass



without understanding it; ready, in a word, to pass an examination, to pass it well, and get my diploma.

Amidst the whole of my learning, the only thing I fancy I know is a few scraps of mathematics which I have picked up this year. Here I certainly think there cannot be two sorts of knowledge. These truths have but one face. They are seen or they are not seen. The water is either muddy or limpid. This is the redeeming point in a study otherwise so forbidding—I mean so forbidding to me, for to others it possesses its charms, *if I may so express myself*. Still more, it has its *poetry*, as I was told by a mathematician. Very possibly; but I could have wished that they had not used the same word for their poetry as we do for ours.

Your remarks on Florian have made me ten years younger; and it is true that growing young again—that is to say, perceiving that we have grown old—is not an agreeable sensation. But provided I grow old in adoring you, I shall hold cheap the “golden age” of the olden time—an age of inconceivable misery in comparison with that in which I live when I think of you—when I imagine that I am beloved a little by you—when I even receive one of your letters—when I even expect one—when I even fancy that you are writing one. Age of pearls and emeralds, age of purple and gold, age that Nemorin never knew, nor Florian, nor any one! As for your other friend, Paul, I will not say.

*A propos* of shepherdesses—it is at the theatre you should see them, if you wish to lose your taste for them for ever. Ah! Louise, the theatre is in truth the strangest thing of all for a country lad like me. There appear there characters who have the pretention to be country people, and nothing can be imagined more comical than their acting, their costume, and the assurance with which they pass themselves off as rustics. For shepherdesses, for Estelles, picture to yourself little dolls dressed up in muslins, ribands, flowers, and pumps; painted up to the eyes, and with their hands thrust in their embroidered pockets. Their language, their manners, and their very simplicity are all of the same false metal.

And yet it is agreed upon, a perfectly settled affair, that these are tenders of sheep; there is no one to contradict it, and I fancy that a good number of the audience actually imagine a country where all this is the case. I should like extremely to see what one of our parsonage sheep would say if it were placed face to face with one of these furbelowed shepherdesses.

And yet this does not prevent the theatre from being a recreation very much to my taste; and for the last few days, not knowing what better to do, I have passed my evenings there. Unfortunately here good actors are rare, and good pieces still more so. We have lamentable dramas, or else vaudevilles — sometimes sprightly, sometimes gay, often detestable, almost always licentious. On emerging from my Greek tragedies, ever grave, solemn, and religious, I find the leap rather a startling one. However I am not ignorant that comedy *mends the morals with a laugh*. I have thereupon laughed with everybody else, but thinking all the while that it would be more correct to say that the drama *corrupts the morals with a laugh*. Every moment in fact the pieces of which I am speaking give offence to modesty, pervert good sense, and throw contempt upon all that men ought to respect—all the while laughing, and laughing loudly; and that is what vexes me most. By dint of laughing in this fashion, people will end by looking on nothing in a serious point of view, and by seeing in the real world a comedy, just as they believe that in these comedies they see the world as it is.

I have been speaking now of immoral pieces; but their name is legion; and the least annoying are not, I assure you, those which make pretensions to morality. For in these last there is so little conviction apparent in the author, his honesty is so awkward, his situations so false, his sentiments so *outré*, that it is evident morality could not have more clumsy advocates. No little virtues, no trivial vices; the personages are either heroes or scoundrels. Vice is punished, fearfully punished, while virtue is rewarded far beyond its merits. Now all this is talking over the heads of our citizens, who are too humble to

aspire to the sublime, and too honest to descend into the sinks of crime.

But that which surprised me no little was to see the ladies of our city occupying the front rows in the boxes, accompanied by their daughters—those same reserved young ladies that I sometimes meet with in society. I certainly do not think that their morals will there be *corrupted by a laugh*; but I do think that they come to hear and see a host of things for which any one guilty of them would be expelled from all decent society. Moreover, they do not laugh—I mean to say that they assume a most serious air—whenever the coarse bursts of laughter and indecent shouts fail not to direct attention to that, over which the least scrupulous modesty would endeavour to cast a veil.

Another thing has vexed me, Louise. After all, this theatre is French, the actors are French; all this is, or ought to be, foreign to us. When people cannot compose pieces of their own, they ought at least to learn to do without those of others, and to make this sacrifice as well to the interest as to the dignity of their nation. These latter, in fact, being designed for another people, efface by a slow, and almost insensible operation, all the peculiar and characteristic features of our own. They inculcate upon it the passions, the prejudices, the hatred, and sympathies of the French public; they transform, for the space of three hours, and four times every week, the citizens of Geneva into inhabitants of Dôle or Dijon. They applaud Bonaparte, who took their country from them, and they hiss and hoot at those who restored it to them again. They clap their hands at a couplet upon the French conquests—at a couplet on the French chevalier—upon the French grenadier. The first time that I heard these acclamations I was unable to comprehend them; and now all that I can comprehend is, that this people, formed by their past life, by their intelligence, by their morality and civic spirit, to be sufficient for themselves, and who besides feels a pride in their own modest country, are nevertheless reduced in their own national theatre to be the mere echo of that rabble, without sense or intellect,



who, in the theatres of France, applaud or condemn at the good pleasure of vaudeville writers and stage-players.

And then there are other occasions, Louise, on which these selfsame people present themselves under a far different and most interesting aspect. On Monday there was a review of the militia. As early as six o'clock in the morning the battalions poured out beyond the walls, and spread over the vast plain of Plainpalais, which was hemmed in on all sides by an immense crowd of people. The loveliness of the weather, the sound of the drums and the military music, gave life and animation to this stirring scene; and that which was at first only a review, assumed the appearance of a magnificent *fête*.

Being but little hackneyed in these patriotic emotions, I soon felt my heart stirred at this spectacle. I strolled from group to group amongst this crowd of spectators, meeting on all sides that sentiment of brotherhood which springs up so quickly from love of country. People conversed together without being acquainted, all sharing in an equal degree in the interest of the review. Throughout the whole mass the language was cordial and the manners affectionate. After having thus wandered about for some time, I at last remained stationary, attracted, like a number of others, to a particular spot by the witty sallies of an old clockmaker. "I am a crazy old timepiece," said this man, in a most serious tone, "but I have two stout fellows yonder who can shoulder a musket!" "You are still brisk and hearty, Father Lebrun!" said some one to him. "Bah! bah!—the oil is drying up; there is no one who can mend the old piece! And yet," he added, drawing himself up with a martial air, "if ever I am wanted!—You understand me, eh?" I listened to this brave man with respect. Like others around me, I had taken a little boy up upon my shoulders in order that he might thus be enabled to see the review. The joyous shouts of these children mingled with the discourse of these old folk, and every time I turned round, I encountered the grateful look of the young mother of my little urchin.

At length the city magistrates entered on the plain; and, after having passed through the ranks, they took their



places under a tent, and the manœuvres commenced. While the cannon thundered, and the whole line burst forth in smoke and noise, I felt myself by degrees thrown into a state of intoxication, the deep and overpowering charm of which I had never till that hour known. My country was all before me—united, happy, modest, without either a luxurious aristocracy or a starving populace—deriving its sole lustre from the happiness and concord of its children. The army that was assembled there, though small, was composed of our citizens, and was our own—was composed of the fathers and the husbands of those women who were circling round them in the crowd. It was our own banner which was waving in the wind, uniting itself in our thoughts with those twenty-and-one banners which float so gloriously in the shadows of our valleys and on the heights of our mountains, forming the symbol of our common country, so great in victory, in happiness, in liberty!

And if this simple review, this mere feigning of military manœuvres, if this crowd, these women, these old men, are sufficient to excite such lively emotions, Louise, what would it be if real danger summoned us to arms? If this soil, these mothers, this country were to be defended, and if a holy cause, rallying our hearts, our arms, and our determination, impelled these phalanxes to the combat! But I must stop, for I feel rather in the vein of tirade, and we have still to return to town.

Already, during the concluding evolutions and the firing, the ramparts were covered with crowds of spectators. On every side, the windows, the trees, and the vehicles which chance had brought near the scene of action, were thronged with animated groups, all adding to the interest of this cheerful scene; while the soldiers, harangued by their chiefs, filled the air with their acclamations. The word was then given, and they filed off homeward. Some gave their muskets to their little boys to carry for them, and these latter marched along triumphant under the glorious burden, and almost wild with joy. Others, with that cheerful good temper which is characteristic of citizen soldiers, endeavoured to make their

way gently through the crowd which pressed around them; and sometimes droll mishaps excited laughter, which circulated from rank to rank and from group to group. Soon, having reached the place of muster, all the soldiers were dismissed, and then they might be seen on every side entering, in little groups, some rustic orchard, and seating themselves in the pretty arbours of trellised vines, where some little banquet had been spread awaiting their return—happy termination of all their labours and fatigues? Later in the evening might be heard here and there in the neighbourhood reports of muskets accompanied by bursts of merry songs.

I wish, Louise, to remain under the influence of this impression. The people of the theatre and the people of Plainpalais bear little resemblance to each other. I am of the latter class, and ever will remain so!

YOUR CHARLES.

## LXXVII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

I HAVE read your letter, Charles, with extreme pleasure. Not because it has informed me of some things which I am sorry to learn, and which I had not even dreamed of, but because of the charm which I find in seeing objects along with you, and with the same eyes. These thoughts and feelings which you have awakened in me for the first time, it appears to me as if I had always known them; and although I can explain in a much more modest fashion our sympathy of opinions and of judgment, I amuse myself by fancying it a proof that our minds are in unison, and that our hearts were made for each other.

There is one point, however, upon which I have promised myself to quarrel with you, and that is your

remarks on those young ladies, of whom you constitute yourself rather too severe a judge, when, at your age, a little chivalrous reserve would have rendered you silent if not indulgent. Moreover, blame the mothers, the fathers, the tutors, the godfathers, the state of society if you will, and still more the nature of things, but do not blame these poor young ladies; for I burn with impatience to see the theatre, and I have made my father promise to take me there the first time we visit the town. How can you imagine that I shall now venture to appear there—that I shall run the risk of appearing in your eyes a citizeness of Dôle or Dijon? 'Is not this a fine result of your indiscreet remarks? M. Prevère is much more accommodating than you; he knows of our project, and yet does not feel in the least scandalized.

Such is my quarrel with you. And now let us make peace until I tell you how much I have been touched, along with you, by the spectacle of that review. Your lines made me warlike visibly to the naked eye. It is most true that love of country heightens, warms, and ennobles every feeling. How can it be otherwise? Recollections of childhood, affection, the ties of kindred, all are included in this one sentiment; and it is this which, in blending the feelings of each in the general mass, exalts to the highest point the invincible power of unanimity and fraternity. On this occasion I have read over again, in that little odd volume which you know, the triumphs of Morgarten, of Sempach, of Morat, and in doing so, I felt a thrill of joy and of triumph too, Charles; for in so just a cause, in the righteous boldness of these men of old, every heart associates itself, combats by their side, and when God gives them the victory, pours out along with them the mighty hymn of thanksgiving, and the thunders of rejoicing!

You see that, following your example, I have drunk from these lofty springs. The waters have been salutary to me, for, truth to say, I hate all drums, and guns, and war; and more especially those warriors who, on the review days, return to their houses in the evening overtaken with wine and staggering, apparently just after

leaving those banquets of which you have drawn so charming a picture. But since reading your letter, I have done my utmost to reconcile myself to these little inconveniences of military life. I even go so far as to persuade myself that the warriors of Grandson and of Morat loved to *refresh* themselves also; and that it happened to them oftentimes, in intervals of peace, to lose, round the bottle, that admirable perpendicularity with which their phalanxes broke the Burgundian lines. How I should like some historian to make researches on this subject, in order that I might hope to find in Brachoz or Redard, *refreshed*, true Switzers, faithful to the traditions of their fathers, and like them, never losing their perpendicularity except in a *cabaret*!

These two worthies gave a rich treat to the village. They arrived about seven o'clock. Brachoz had lost his gun, and some mischievous wags had filled Redard's cartouch-box with grass. Notwithstanding these disasters the two made their appearance repeating over again all the words of command of the morning—Brachoz grave and solemn, and addressing all his orders to the *battalion* and the *column*; Redard with eyes almost closed, and swaying heavily from side to side. On entering the village, Brachoz commanded the column to march in step, and the poor column, who had no other means of supporting his equilibrium but by steering a zig-zag course, in endeavouring to fall into line fell into a ditch, while Brachoz, thinking to hold him back, rolled in after him. You may imagine the roars of laughter. Brachoz and Redard, being extricated with great difficulty, each accused the other of being the cause of the disaster, and after quarrelling they were proceeding to sign a peace in the village cabaret, when my father happened to come up, and made each return to his own house. You see, Charles, that this beautiful field of Plainpalais is the stage on which the drama is performed, while our country communes are the side-scenes from whence the actors go out and return. This is the reason why I was not under the influence of the charm until you made me so.

But *à propos*, you have allowed the De la Cours to



return without ever giving me warning. What have become of all your phantoms? I expected, I confess, to have received a most stormy letter from you, and yet I have—nothing. M. Ernest was actually obliged to come himself to the parsonage to tell me that he had returned!

They arrived on Friday, and yesterday we received his visit just as dinner was over. We were all assembled together. He presented himself with much ease and politeness also; but like a man who, if he is not ashamed of it, has at least totally forgotten a certain phantasy which prompted him to ask for the hand of a simple country girl. This was a rustic caprice from which he appears to have entirely recovered. He has brought back from the town an air, a manner, and a tone, decidedly distinguished, but not the least rural. The poor Widow Crozat formed the subject of conversation; but scarcely had he said a few words on the severity of the winter and the early appearance of the spring, when he courteously inquired from me for you. Tell the truth now, you did not expect such attention on his part? I replied that you were quite well, and that in a few days you would be with us. This news did not appear either to gratify or vex him, and it was impossible for me to conjure up, from anything in his manner, even the slightest phantom. When I, in my turn, made inquiries for his mother, he replied that but for a slight headache with which she had been attacked in the morning, she would have accompanied him; and then he went on to speak of her with an air of kindness and respectful affection which pleased me greatly, although without my well knowing why, for assuredly it was very natural. What I have certainly discovered is that M. Ernest has assumed an air of amenity and gravity which becomes him extremely; and one always feels gratified on finding people more amiable than they were formerly.

There is, in full detail, the particulars of our interview. I hope that for once you will make a truce with your alarms, and that you will feel entirely at rest on the subject of M. Ernest's *passion*. This tranquillity will come the more *à propos*, that it is probable you will

soon be thrown in each other's way; and it ~~is~~ pleasant when people associate together to be on an amicable footing. My father, I assure you, did not appear to me to be the least dazzled by either his *rank* or *wealth*; on the contrary he received him with so cold an air, that I was obliged to furnish an extra amount of agreeability and conversation to prevent our neighbour from remarking it too much. M. Prevere left me full scope, but without coming to my assistance, as he generally does; so that, if I have discovered any improvement in M. Ernest, the least that ~~he~~ he can do on his side is to allow that I also have made some little progress.

I asked M. Prevere if he had no commission to charge me with for you. He smiled, and answered that to spare me all trouble he would write to you himself on an early day. So, Charles, a little patience, no rebellion, and a truce to supplications; for this serious affair is discussed in a council into which I am not admitted,

YOUR LOUISE.

## LXXVIII.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

If you are impatient, my dear boy, to return to us, we are not less so to get you back again. But I wished that you should not find yourself placed in an equivocal situation with regard to Louise; and, until I could bring M. Reybaz to agree with me on the propriety of publishing your engagement, it was more suitable that you should remain where you are. To-day our decision is taken. You may therefore set out to-morrow, Thursday, and on Sunday the announcement of your marriage will be read in the church, after the morning service. From

that moment your position will be clearly established in the eyes of all, and we shall both be relieved from that embarrassment which a secret, especially one so difficult to keep as this, always imposes.

Is it necessary for me to remind you, Charles, that this step in no degree changes M. Reybaz's intention, which was, always, that you should not be united to his daughter until you had received your ordination as a minister of the Holy Gospel? Your recent success has shown me that you are pursuing, in the most direct and honourable way, the road to that vocation which will afford a sure refuge and stay for your future life. Persevere, my dear boy, in your efforts; and in thus fulfilling my expectations, you will be the joy of all who love you. M. Reybaz is well pleased at your success, and Louise derives from it a happiness which displays itself in every look and gesture, as well as in every word she utters.

The De la Cours, who have passed the winter in Geneva, returned here a few days ago. This is a circumstance which rather disappoints me; but far less than if I were not assured, as I am, of your prudence, and of those generous feelings which so naturally spring up in a heart full of happiness and gratitude. I told you, at the time the circumstance occurred, of M. Ernest having made proposals for Louise's hand; and if I had been at liberty to choose, I should certainly have preferred making the announcement of your engagement public on a day when he was absent from the neighbourhood. But since we are unable to spare his feelings in this point, we may at least take all such other precautions as depend upon ourselves, carefully avoiding either to encourage or authorise any imprudent manifestations. It is on this account that we keep secret our intention of publishing the announcement on Sunday, in order to avoid if possible all noisy rejoicings on the part of the peasants, the echo of which might possibly be painful to M. Ernest.

This, Charles, is what I wished to say to you. Show my letter to M. Dervev alone; but in taking your farewell of the ladies, do not forget to express to them my earnest wish that they would come and pass a few weeks,

in the summer, at the parsonage, with my friend Dervey. This is a favour which I solicit in the name of our whole circle, and one to which we shall look forward from this moment with the utmost pleasure. I send you some money, in order that you may regulate all your little affairs, and, in particular, remunerate liberally all the domestics who have done you any services.

To-morrow then, my dear boy, I look for the pleasure of embracing you.

PREVERE.

## LXXIX.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO MONSIEUR DERVEY.

*The Parsonage.*

I OWE you, my dear colleague, some account of the events of last Sunday. Thanks be to God, it is over; but not without having occasioned me deep anxiety. Let us trust, however, that the consequences will be those which we have anticipated. Already M. Ernest has left the chateau, and his mother is about to rejoin him; this tour through the cantons, which was projected at Geneva, is given as the reason of their departure.

M. Reybaz and myself had agreed, out of respect for the feelings of M. Ernest, to keep secret our intention of publishing the announcement on the Sunday. This was in order to avoid those manifestations and rejoicings which are customary on similar occasions. But so early as Thursday we saw that the thing would be difficult. Already it was suspected that Charles would arrive on that day; and towards evening some of the peasants went out to meet him, others waited for his coming at the outskirts of the village, muskets were fired—in short he was welcomed almost openly as Louise's betrothed, and many of the country people spoke in his presence of the



announcement as being fixed for the following Sunday. On Saturday we learned that they were making preparations for a *fête*. They had planned a rural feast, and a dance in honour of the betrothed couple, who were to be invited to be present. Without waiting any longer, and anxious to regulate this festival since we could not prevent it, we made it known that the dance and collation would take place at the parsonage, and that Charles and Louise invited all the villagers as their guests. This news was welcomed with shouts of joy, and the warmest expressions of delight.

From the Thursday, M. Ernest, whom we had seen almost every day previously, did not make his appearance. On the Saturday evening I received a note from Madame De la Cour, in which, supposing with reason that I was in the secret of the proceeding and the sentiments of her son, although I have never had the opportunity of conversing with her upon the subject, she conjured me to delay the public announcement of this marriage, or at least to prevent it from being made the subject of public rejoicings in the village. A brief allusion to her son's state of mind was offered both as the motive and the excuse for her request, and her whole note showed plainly her anxiety and anguish. I replied, that, as to the announcement, it was most important to hasten its publication; as to the rejoicings, I had, from motives of delicacy with which I was deeply impressed, exerted myself to suppress them, but without success; that moreover I would take the liberty of advising her to withdraw, along with her son, from the neighbourhood for that day, taking care to set out before the hour of divine service. Antoine, who was the bearer of my reply, returned soon after, but without being commissioned by Madame De la Cour to declare her determination. He had found her in tears, and had remarked an air of general agitation over the whole house; while, in the court-yard, some servants and workmen were assembled, along with a chasseur called Paulet, an old companion of M. Ernest's riotous days, and one who had assisted him to accomplish the destruction of the unhappy girl

Coissat. These people, guessing in part Autoine's errand, followed him on his departure with insults and hootings. So unworthy an aggression, in leading me to fear some scene of public disorder on the following day, had almost induced me to determine upon suspending the whole affair, both the *fête* and the announcement; but on examining with more coolness what might be the consequence of this delay, and the publicity it would create, I resolved to pursue the arrangement first determined upon, and to trust for the best.

The following morning I learned nothing respecting the De la Cours, up to the hour of divine service. All was quiet. The peasants assembled quietly before the porch of the church; whilst Charles, to avoid exciting any demonstrations on their part, remained in the house. I was engaged in my own apartment reading over my sermon, when, towards ten o'clock, I saw the servants of the De la Cours arrive, accompanied by the two brothers Paulet and some others, who, like them, are in the habit of never attending church. Instead of mingling with the country people, they kept themselves apart. This attitude occasioned me some anxiety. I gave orders to ring, and, anticipating the usual time of commencing service by twenty minutes, I took my way to the church, passing through the crowd, who followed immediately behind me. The church was soon full, with the exception of the first of the three benches which are reserved for the more opulent members of the congregation; some persons who had come from the town occupied the other two.

I waited impatiently for the bell to cease ringing in order to get through the announcement before the arrival of the De la Cours, supposing they should decide, in opposition to my wishes and advice, upon coming to church; when, at the sound of a carriage stopping before the entrance, an emotion of lively curiosity was visible amongst the congregation, and all eyes were turned towards the door. It was the De la Cours. M. Ernest entered first, holding his head high, and affecting an air of perfect indifference, mingled with a slight shade of

disdain for that curiosity of which he was the object. He looked around for Louise, who was not in the church; and at the moment when his eyes met those of Charles, his features, pale with emotion, and painfully contracted, were overspread by a deep blush, while an involuntary shudder seemed to pass through his frame. Madame De la Cour walked behind him, her veil lowered over her face. Both, in taking their places on the vacant bench, saluted some of their acquaintances amongst the strangers from the town. I seized this moment to read the announcement; but at the first word which I uttered, M. Ernest turned round, seated himself, and fixing his eyes upon me, listened without betraying the least emotion to those brief words so bitter to him, and in his situation so humiliating. Agitation and pity made my voice tremble; and such was my distress, that, in publishing this announcement so long and earnestly wished for by me, and so full of happiness for my poor Charles, I felt all the sorrow of a judge pronouncing a sentence of death. I afterwards offered up prayer and preached, but it was without warmth, without unction, and without the power of withdrawing my thoughts or my looks from the unhappy young man who was sitting immediately before me. Towards the end of the service he appeared to sink under the effort he was making; his eye grew vacant, an expression of gloomy dejection overspread his countenance, insensibly taking the place of the vain mask of indifference and pride which he had assumed.

The service being over, the congregation was passing out, when, from the pulpit where I was still sitting, I heard the report of fire-arms and exclamations outside. M. Ernest had just left the church, I hurried after him. As soon as I got into the open air, I perceived a great tumult among the peasants, and, at a short way off, Charles, who was holding one of the Paulets under him on the ground. In the distance, the carriage of the De la Cours was quietly driving away. This is what had occurred. The peasants had the delicacy to allow M. Ernest to be past before they commenced firing; but, at the first report, some stones were thrown from behind a hedge, and, falling



in the midst, had wounded several individuals. It was the Paulets at the head of a party of day labourers. Two of them were seized immediately, and the rest took to flight. I re-established order, the two men were set at liberty, the firing and rejoicing were resumed, a deputation of the elders of the village came into the garden to congratulate Louise, Charles, and M. Reybaz, and the remainder of the fête passed off without disorder or fresh alarms. For the rest, M. Ernest was already at a distance when this occurred, and none of his domestics had been recognised among those who had accompanied the Paulets.

I had charged Antoine to watch at a distance and ascertain all that passed at the De la Cours. Toward the middle of the day, an hour after service, he saw M. Ernest issue from the avenue on horseback, and take the way next Chouilly; by means of this circuit it is practicable to reach the town without passing through the village. This morning we have heard that Madame De la Cour is making arrangements to rejoin her son at Geneva, and from thence to set out with him on a tour through the cantons. As to the length of their absence and the time of their return home, these are points which are probably not known even to themselves. If at any future period you should hear anything on this subject, will you have the goodness to inform me.

Such, my dear brother, is the history of my tribulations. We shall now, I hope, enjoy some repose, and taste the happiness of our reunion. M. Reybaz was little occupied with M. Ernest. His whole heart was in the *fête*, and in the marks of respect which he received from the country people on all sides. As for Louise, this day, which brought her so conspicuously into notice, could not be much to her taste; nevertheless she presided in the evening at the collation and the dance with all her usual good grace. She had been kept in ignorance of the scenes of the morning. As for Charles, I leave you to imagine his joy, his gaiety, the intoxication of his spirits. I was obliged to restrain him on several occasions, for he overstepped unceasingly that sober demeanour which is pleasing



to M. Reybaz, and which he exacts from Charles more rigidly than from any person else.

It only remains for me now to recall to your recollection, my dear brother, the promise which you made to Charles. Here is the fine weather fairly set in. Your ladies, I hope, are anxious to make a lasting acquaintance with Louise, who is worthy of loving them, and of being loved by them in return. Charles looks forward anxiously to the hour and the moment which is to unite his family of the parsonage with his family of the town. These are his expressions; from the lips of this orphan they are very dear to me, and I cannot hear them pronounced without feeling my heart melt with emotions of the tenderest gratitude. Let his wishes be accomplished, I entreat you, and be all with us before the 1st of June, or at the latest, on that day. Already your apartments are being prepared, and these preparations constitute a fête, in addition to that perpetual fête which we now daily enjoy in the society of these dear children. Blessed be God who has reserved for me this happiness!

Your most affectionate

PREVERE.

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## LXXX.

### THE PRECENTOR TO CHAMPIN.

#### *The Parsonage.*

WHILST you are wedding, Champin, we are publishing the banns here. It was on Sunday last. M. Prevere pushed me to it, as well because secrecy was no longer seasonable, as to close the business with this notable, who pleases him less than he does you. M. De la Cour appeared at church in the morning, as if to confirm there, in public, a refusal which I had given him between ourselves, and

that twice too. As soon as service was over, he mounted his horse and rode off towards town, whither his mother will presently follow him. So spare your pleading, which would come too late. As for that pack of tongues, I no longer see what they have left to prate about. Thus thrown off the scent, they will be forced to hark upon another track.

The day was fine, and will not be soon forgotten in the hamlet. Just after preaching, as we were leaving the church, a thunder of muskets rattled on every side; so, that if the carriage of the De la Cours had not been already at a distance, it would not have been their coachman who could have governed the horses. At this moment some blackguards began to throw stones; two were well thrashed, the others made their escape. After the firing, Olivet gave me a hint that I was to repair to the garden, with the people of the parsonage, and wait there. I did so—(I had thirty-five bottles of white, all ready, ever since the evening before, and clean-washed glasses); it was a deputation of the hamlet, the old folks at their head, to compliment. Charles was there; Louise came down stairs; we took our stand beneath the gallery in front of the door; and, Olivet having given the word, they came in. The ancients, Redard at their head, were dressed in black; the rest followed, two and two, in their Sunday clothes; and those who had been confirmed that year, ranged in double file, brought up the rear—the girls on the left, the lads on the right; behind, the urchins of the hamlet. Having come facing us, Redard said—I took a copy of the compliment—

“MONSIEUR REYBAZ,—

“We are charged by the village to wish you joy with all their hearts on the aforesaid alliance, which is a pledge of the blessing of God upon your head. May he cause his sun to shine upon this couple, and prolong your days, to the end that you may enjoy their happiness and be a prop to their paths!”

“MONSIEUR CHARLES AND MAMSELLE LOUISE,—

“On the part of the same, we are charged to wish flowers and fruit to your union, certain as we are that virtues will not be wanting, the proof of which is hard by, being the mother of the unfortunate.”

Here the guns fired twice running. After which the catechumens of the year, coming forward in front of the crowd, sang these lines:—

“May Heaven to each no stinted portion yield  
Of priceless blessings, each succeeding year!  
Implore His wakeful guardianship to shield  
This happy pair, to all the hamlet dear!”

Here the guns fired again. I replied:—

“I feel much honoured by the compliment of the hamlet; and these young people, thus *fêted* by our ancients, are moved to the heart's core, and resolved to merit the blessings wished them by such worthy persons.”

Here the guns fired a fourth salute; after which we shook hands, and I desired the wine to be brought forth: I and Charles waiting on the ancients, and the little one serving the young folk with wine and water. There were sixty-four people present; nevertheless, seeing the women watching behind the hedge, I made a sign, and they came forward and mixed with the company (besides the thirty-five of white, I had fifteen of red by me). It was a pleasing sight to see, Champin, the garden thus all alive with visitors; and M. Prevere, who, coming afterwards, recalled attention to the occasion, and tempered by his presence the freedom of speech, always inclined to break out after a glass of wine. On the other hand, Charles did his best to keep them merry and bustling. The quatrain is by Lauron, the schoolmaster, and had never served previously; for he made it only the day before, under the eye of Ami Jaquet and in less than an hour's time.

In the afternoon, about three o'clock, commenced the *fête*, at which M. Prevere presided, while I attended to

the arrangements, and took care that each had his share both of the feast and of amusement. The weather being fine, I had the tables set out under the acacias, where there was a sight worth looking at. M. Prevere was at one end; then came the ancients; then the villagers—fathers, mothers, lads and lasses who were communicants—Charles and Louise in the middle, and I at the other end, within reach of the cask of wine which was placed at my right, with Antoine to draw as it was wanted—rather at my signal than at my order. But I was thwarted by Brachoz, who, having taken up his post near the cask, took right good care of himself, under pretext of being civil to his neighbours and sparing trouble to Antoine, who had already enough on hands. So, before the collation was half over, he was spinning long stories of the year '40: of the grand pact of the three brothers Ramuz, the reinforcement of Ceseignin, and fifty other adventures, some miraculous, others laughable. Afterwards, when we rose from table, there he was staggering backward, and, coming to the slope, down he fell. Then several surrounded him, to the end that M. Prevere might not be scandalized by the sight; and, partly by main force, partly by promising him some mulled wine, they at length lodged him in the stable, where, throwing himself on the straw, he was soon snoring soundly. As for the small fry, they were spread out on the lawn, where Martha dealt out a like share to each of them. They drank in turn.

After the collation, the guns were fired as the signal for the dance, and the fiddlers (they were Dutoit, the violin, and Guedrin, the clarionet) played the *branle*. Then from the lawn, where they still were, forming into couples, Charles and Louise at the head, they tripped towards the barn, where the country dance was struck up; while we ancients, scattered about, looked on at the young folks twirling. It was hard for the Coissats not to see their daughter there. Worthy people! without blemish from father to son—there they are, brought to envy the lot of more than one who is not to be compared to them; and not Monsieur Ernest, with all his money, could wash out the



stain that he has thrown upon them. Indeed, if it had not been for M. Prevere, who distinguished them, keeping close by them, it would have been all they could do to stay till the conclusion. At sunset I made a sign to the fiddlers, who played the parting dance and left the platform. We then wished good-night, and the folks accompanied each other home, chatting on their way by the moonlight; from which I learned, by the remarks they passed, that every one went away content with the *fête*, and looking back to it with pleasure. One thing, however, will mark the anniversary of it sadly for the Piombets. During the dancing at the parsonage their daughter drew her last breath. She was betrothed to Paul Redard.

You have now, Champin, a full account of this day, which has given me more satisfaction than I thought; finding myself thus supported by the whole hamlet, and honoured in Louise, whose look, bating a little embarrassment, betokened content. As for the other, I would have been better pleased with more temperate transports, and a less boisterous gaiety. Nevertheless, his conduct for this year, and those examinations in which he showed himself among the first, are an indication that time is in his favour; and that, with age, the wine which is fermenting, will deposit its lees and get its *bouquet*. He is to stay here for some time, while their academies keep holiday; and M. Prevere will begin Hebrew with him, which they read backwards. As you must have heard, the Derveys are coming to us for a week; and then it will be for us to give them as hearty a welcome as they have given this lad.

If, some day this summer, you would come to us with Catherine and her husband, I should be glad to know him and to give you a like welcome.

Your affectionate

c

REYBAZ.

[*The correspondence is here suspended from the month of June till the month of October, during the stay of Charles at the parsonage.*]

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## LXXXI.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*Geneva*—the close of October.

HERE I am, Louise, precipitated once more from Heaven to earth. These walls stifle me; these houses crush me—my chamber, my books, one of my professors whom I have just met—all oppress me with an unutterable weariness. If, being loved by you, I were not in that point of view the *happiest* of mortals, how plentifully would my present destiny, after these months of felicity, furnish me with material for lamentable pictures!

What sunshine, what flowers, what smiling radiance adorns the sweet spot which calls you mistress! What evenings! I adore those by-paths, that bench, those old linden-trees, that firmament on which, with upturned eyes, we gazed together! The least of these recollections makes me thrill with happiness, and renders odious in my eyes all that moves around me, all that I see or hear, all that is not of them! I pause, for my heart is oppressed, and all my happiness cannot prevent me from shedding tears of sorrow.

Our classes do not open for another fortnight. What am I to do with myself until then? I have met some of my former comrades again. They were so full of their own affairs—I mean of their studies—while I also was full of mine, so that we talked without understanding each other. Yesterday, however, they dragged me away to join a party of pleasure to Mount Saleve. From its summit I saw the parsonage; I could distinguish the steeple, and I think even the linden-trees; my heart beat with joy! I seated myself, with one of my companions, under the shade of that clump of beech-trees which is seen from all sides around, and which is called the *Thirteen Trees*, and there I told him my history. How he listened to me! How he envied me, Louise! In truth, I pitied him. And how differently do I feel now that

I am no longer obliged to conceal my happiness—from the Derveys, for instance, now that they know all, now that they are acquainted with you, now that they think me the happiest fellow upon earth, and that they rejoice along with me like amiable, like true, friends, as they all are!

This mountain of Saleve, Louise, is a most charming place for an excursion; I will take you there some day or other. It is not very lofty, and yet it is abrupt. The summit is formed of barren little hillocks, without trees, without habitations, and from which the eye ranges on the one side over the majestic amphitheatre of the Alps, while, on the other, it looks down upon the sweetest little landscape which was ever shut in by mountains. In the centre of the basin sleeps the lake, tranquil as a mirror, reflecting the varied tints of grey or azure which veil the heavens; while from its banks, as far as the blue walls of the Jura, there extend, in gentle undulations, enchanting hills—here decked with smiling fields, there displaying the dark shades of clustering woods, or else glittering with snow-white villages. Overhead, in the heavens, the fleecy clouds sailed slowly onwards, casting their passing shadows over this vast scene, and insensibly veiling the distant hills, only to leave them to shine out again with added splendour, after they had passed away. While we were contemplating this spectacle, a little fleet of sails, which we had not at first perceived, glided suddenly out of the shade, and added as it were a new life and charm to this scene, already so majestic and so beautiful.

From the summit, we descended on the opposite side of the mountain. Here there are neither precipices, as on the side next Geneva, nor wild hillocks, as upon the top; but rustic valleys, shady nooks, scattered rocks intersected with stony pathways, and now and then green and verdant openings, affording pasturage to some cows; or farther on, clumps of walnut-trees, beneath which are scattered rustic dwellings. Everything in this valley breathes of peace, and at the sight of these good people enjoying their leisure in front of their dilapidated cottages,

one is tempted to envy them their life of happy idleness. Behind the hamlet of Monnetier, in certain obscure retreats, I noted two or three little spots to build our hut, if ever the pastoral age should return upon the earth, as you one day expressed a wish when compassionating the condition of the sheep of our day. One thing, however, is wanting in this neighbourhood, and that is, some fine sheet of water.

We stopped to dine at Mornex. This is a village hanging on the side of a mountain crowned with a ruined castle. There are some pretty houses in this place, where families from Geneva come to spend a few of the summer months. Consequently, the tourist encounters citizens reading under some shady tree, and meets whole caravans of ladies mounted upon asses, gentlemen in stylish costume, young demoiselles in their town finery—all chatting and jesting together, and all these people, Louise, (I made my informant repeat it twice over), are here for the purpose of recovering from a multitude of maladies! In fact why not? They may not indeed have been very bad; but certainly, with such a life as this, they must soon become much better. We were obliged to keep saluting every moment, until at last we found ourselves under the shade of the chestnut woods, through which the path descends in a zig-zag course to the banks of the Arve, when it rejoins the highroad. This mountain delighted me extremely, and I promised myself to pay it another visit, without considering however that winter will soon be here.

I have some news of the De la Cours to tell you. They soon had enough of the cantons. For the last five weeks they have been residing here temporarily in a furnished house, which they have hired by the month. M. Ernest rides out on horseback from time to time; I have not yet met him, but I am told he looks fierce and gloomy. You now see, Louise, that my phantoms of former days were only too real. But since the announcement has taken place, I have no longer any fears. The porter has not said a word to me about this affair, though I would have willingly permitted him to tell me



what they are doing in their furnished house, and if they intend to pass the winter here or return to the chateau. Whoever lives will see.

But tell me, Louise, am I not to spend Christmas-day at the parsonage? Can you melt the lead without me? Will you undertake to present my request to M. Prevere and to your father? My destiny, fair and smiling though it be, is not yet finally settled. I should like also to know whether there will be an altar for Martha, a purse for Antoine, wolves for Dourak, and wine for Brachoz. Let me only have the hope of seeing you again thus soon, and you will immediately see me cured of all my melancholy, and going about my studies,\* singing. If it is refused me, I shall write you nothing but dolorous complaints, which will make you feel as wearied in reading them as I feel unhappy in being far from you.

YOUR CHARLES.

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## LXXXII.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

YOUR dolorous complaints, Charles, do not displease me. They accord too well with that state of mind in which I have been for several days. You saw me gay and foolish, I am now sober, almost melancholy; and these fields and landscapes, which you speak of with so much enthusiasm, do not appear to me either very flowery or very cheerful. It is apparently on account of the decline of the autumn.

But are you, like me, subject to have snatches of old songs running through your mind, and for days together constantly rising to your lips and struggling for utterance? Just now it is no longer the "snows of former years," but the first verse of Schiller's Don Carlos:—

"Die schönen Tage in Aranjuez  
Sind nun zu Ende."†

\* A species of fortune-telling.

† The happy days of Aranjuez are passed.

Scarcely had I resumed my domestic duties, and the vulgar train of occupations which your visit occurred to interrupt, when this verse immediately sprung up into my thoughts; and I repeat it, and I cannot hinder myself from repeating it—sometimes into myself, sometimes in a low voice, when I am alone.

“Die schönen Tage in Aranjuez  
Sind nun zu Ende.”

I have presented your request to my father. He judged the demand just, almost proper, at least perfectly natural, since, after all, the matter in question is domestic, ceremonial, and an operation of most serious moment in his eyes. For my part I shall rejoice to see you again; but as for these prognostics I dread them without believing them, and for a long time back I only assist at these games in order not to lose my right of affixing to them my own interpretation, which I always turn to the most favourable point of view; while my father, as his wont is, inclines to the darker side of the picture, and thus causes himself no trifling degree of anxiety.

Thus then this point is settled. You can now put a truce to your troubles, and go, singing, to your studies. I communicated your news respecting the De la Cours to M. Prevere, but he had already heard it from M. Dervev, who however wrote him that he could learn nothing of their plans for the winter. You have made me smile at the gloomy and ferocious air which you have been so kind as to lend to M. Ernest: remember, if you please, that I have seen him all smiles, and perfectly at his ease. And now, when you describe him as gloomy, I might imagine it possible; but fierce?

I feel at present as if I had explored every nook of this Mount Saleve, of which you have sent me so charming a description. From my childhood I have been familiar with it as a blue mountain streaked with lines of grey, which are interrupted in one particular spot by a deep chasm. Beyond this I fancied there existed dreary caverns, solitudes, and wolves; and, not far distant, the Alps, which from this appear to be piled up upon those hillocks

of which you speak. I am charmed to learn that, instead, there are pastures, picturesque and ruinous cottages, and labourers enjoying the cool evening air with folded arms. Only I think your chattering parties of pleasure, and your well-dressed gentlemen, spoil the picture a little; and for this reason I shall remain faithful to my rocks at Allomogne, where the scenery is doubtless less beautiful, less diversified, but where the visitor is at least alone to enjoy it.

Besides I should not have there our own beautiful rivers; and without the coolness of their limpid waves, without the rippling murmur of the current, the fairest landscape would have to regret the absence of what constitutes its principal charm. You remember the poets; do they ever forget this feature, and do they ever depict a grove where the purling stream does not flow over its pebbly bed, bathing the tender flowers on its banks? Be assured then, Charles, that near the spot where our cottage is to be built, some little stream must glide along to refresh the herbage—murmuring along its rocky bed, and presenting in its modest course a dearly loved image of our life. And this is the true charm of rivulets, Charles; they place before us the movement and the animation of life. They pass away, they flee onward like our days, they soon glide from our view; but in imagination we still see them flying onwards, far far away, with unfaltering course, to bathe new banks—sometimes barren, sometimes clothed in verdure—and at last mingle themselves, without losing their separate existence, in that grand reservoir which summons to it all the waters of the world. Is it not an image full of charm? An image as striking as it is mysterious, to which the heart attaches itself with delight, tasting in it a sentiment both of melancholy and hope, of tenderness and calm—that calm which springs from the very beauty of the pictures it presents, and the secret confidence in their teachings, which are as the voice of God addressing us in his works. No, I will never say again, as I did once, that the poets copy each other because they repeat each other. I can now feel that each of them attains, and must in his turn attain, to the same

inexhaustible source of poetry; and that, writing upon the same subjects, and portraying the same sentiments, they sing, through ages, a hymn ever the same and ever new!

It is M. Prevere who assisted me to this discovery. Your letter, which I read to him, led us to converse on these subjects. Oh, how I wish that you could have heard him! How he feels—how he explains—how he turns everything to good!—without effort, without intending to preach a sermon, by mingling with his serious remarks, lively sallies, and interesting particulars, always calculated to awaken and guide the intellect. The course of the conversation led him to speak to me of the different methods of cultivating the natural sciences; and on this subject he read to me some pages from the writings of De Saussure, which have excited in me an extreme desire not to coop ourselves up within the four walls of our cottage, but to make excursions from it towards those high Alps of which the author gives such simple and attractive descriptions. “This learned man,” said M. Prevere, “is a poet; and the more so, that he never dreams he is one.” And, to prove it to me, he read some verses of the Abbe De Lille upon the Montanvert, in which the Abbe, in wishing to treat his subject poetically, draws a picture of it at once both false and brilliant. I fancied I was looking on the one hand at gold a little tarnished, and on the other at some piece of gaudy coloured glass. After which M. Prevere, taking from the table a little volume all scuffed and soiled, commenced to read me some verses in an unknown language, “We were speaking of rural poetry,” said he, “here we have some which is touching, amiable, glowing—perfect as nature herself!” I scolded him for thus making my mouth water by showing me a pleasure which it was forbidden me to taste. “But, Louise, I will lend you the translation of Delille.” “But I suppose he has rendered this author just as he did Montanvert?” “A little so,” replied M. Prevere, with a smile. This book, Charles, was the Georgics. My father, who happened to come up then, interposed with a remark against books in general,



and against the Georgics in particular. "You are mistaken, my dear Reyzbaz," said M. Prevère, "for this is in fact a work on agriculture; it teaches the precepts of the art you love best." "The agriculture of books," replied my father, "never made one carrot grow. Agriculture is a thing to be learned by practice, and not from a pen. The rain and the sunshine are in the hand of God; and for the rest, man must do it by the labour of his hands and the sweat of his brow: but, as to writing, it will neither help nor hinder the ripening of a single ear, and your Georgic with his rhymes did less to lower the price of labour than if he had looked after his own fields, and taken a sickle in his hand along with his own reapers." It was very amusing. My vexation at not being able to read Virgil's agriculture, made me take part with my father, and we kept up the war so agreeably, that the evening passed away in a twinkling—like the little rivulet when it reaches those places where its bed is narrowed, where the ground shelves abruptly, where some rocky barrier arouses and excites its fury, where it darts down like an arrow, and then emerges afterwards from beneath the gurgling waves, to find its resting-place, a couple of paces further off, in some deep and tranquil pool.

Your LOUISE.

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### LXXXIII.

CHARLES TO LOUISE.

*The Parsonage.*

I ADORE rivulets, Louise, I long to go to Allemogne before the winter binds their impetuous movements in her icy chains, and hushes to silence that sweet melody of their waves which you have taught me to comprehend. I used to love roaring torrents and foaming waves, and the heady tumult of stormy waters; but I confess I thought those

innocent streams, which murmur eternally between two unbroken banks, insipid and monotonous, until the far sweeter murmur of your pen came to enchant my heart, and open it to the reception of new feelings. I have told you already that I know not either how to see or feel as I ought to do, and in these domains through which your spirit wanders, I, with bandaged eyes, can enter only when led by your guiding hand, or find pleasure in them only when your voice reveals to me their mystery. I begin, therefore, to believe that M. Dumont was correct—only too correct. The more I learn, the less I know; the more I study, the less I reflect; the farther I advance in the career on which I have entered, the more indistinct and distant does the goal appear. Behold me in theology. Good Heavens! how little does all I see answer to my expectation! I pictured to myself an attractive study, full of animation, addressing itself to the soul rather than to the mind, enriching the heart rather than the memory. And here I am learning Hebrew, learning dogmas, learning history, learning homilies, exegeses, apologies. For the first few days I felt so disappointed that I assure you my heart was full, and I could not prevent myself from telling my troubles to M. Dervev. “You are not then,” said he, “of the opinion of those who would have us study even more numerous expositions, more abstruse dogmas, more profound history, and I know not how many sciences, doctrines, and systems, which are manufactured in Germany?”

“Oh, no, indeed!” I replied.

“Ah! well, my dear boy, console yourself then by keeping well in mind that theology is not religion; that, on the contrary, it is very often most fatal to the religious spirit; and that, being everywhere and essentially composed of the same elements, ours offers us the advantage of being restrained within just limits by men of piety and good sense, who know that, from such a source, there can neither be found heat to warm nor flame to enlighten, and that the mission of the minister of Christ is a mission of labour and not of erudition.” These explanations tranquillized my mind a little. But it is not the less true that

I find this system cold, too far removed from the practice, too much beside the real matter, which after all is to enroll one's self under the banner of the Saviour, not in order to become a learned man, but to feed a flock, to consecrate to him the life, and to serve him by the threefold and powerful ascendancy of example, of works, and preaching.

Ah! how often do I think of M. Prevere! How often do I regret that wonderful school in which I learned so well, even when I studied so little; that school in which I drank in those feelings, that energy, and that strong desire of action, which I hope will enable me successfully to resist the disappointment which I experience! Ah! if he were only here to assume that chair of instruction from which they endeavour to teach us such a variety of things, and, armed with the authority of his life, with the experience of his pastorate, with the warmth of his charity, and the eloquence of his language—to instruct us, not in the science of books but in the science of men, to teach us of their evils, their necessities, their miseries—if he came to instruct us not in such or such celebrated doctrine, but how men may be guided, consoled, and saved, and how we can contribute to the good of our fellow-creatures—how the simplest passages of the Gospel contain, for the faithful disciple who practises them, far more than for the learned man who comments upon them, treasures of wisdom and contentment, in leading him to look for joy in self-denial, greatness in humility, gain in sacrifice—if he came to reveal to us in what consists a true minister of Christ, and, while he painted to us the difficulty not less than the loveliness of that vocation, to inflame and exalt our youthful courage—what would not be the life and fruit of such teaching, and what would not be the charms and attractions of this study! And do you not see, with me, Louise, all the theologies of the world, all the doctors of Germany too, left far, far behind, in the art of forming young men for the sacred ministry, by this single minister—teaching only what he had practised, felt, and proved throughout his entire life?

It is very true, Louise, that at my age people form

illusions, which the reality is destined to dissipate. It is true, also, that I have, up to this period, received exactly ten lessons, so that it is a little premature for me to form my judgment; but I give you my opinions as they arise, leaving them open to after correction. In this way you see I am swelling out, instead of emptying, that bag of gossip which your father thought so nearly exhausted. At all events, I beg of you not to communicate these remarks to M. Prevere, for with what air could I support my own opinions before him? Has not he, as well as others who are an honour to our church, sprung from this school? In fact, I begin to believe that people are what they wish to be, and that disappointment and criticisms indicate want of inclination still more than want of resources.

Besides, I shall see you again at Christmas; so a truce to all complainings! Ah! thank your good father, who has so clearly seen how requisite my presence is. And who, besides, has so good a right as I have to consult the book of fate? What have I not to ask of it respecting the authors of my being? You speak of those words which dwell upon the mind and rest upon the tongue. To me, Louise, especially for some time back, these have been "*My father! My mother!*" Where are they? Why are they ignorant of the happiness of their child? Shall I ever know them? Have they forgotten me? Ah! I cannot believe it, and I feel less bitterness in thinking that they are dead, than in persuading myself that they know I am alive, and yet hide themselves from me!

But it is not melting lead which will reveal these mysteries! As for you, Louise, in dreading these prognostics you give grounds for suspecting that you attach more importance to them than they deserve. Endeavour then to laugh at the evil ones, and believe only the good. That is the plan which I follow. What can all the lead in the world weigh in the scale against your father's public promises—against his increasing confidence in me—against the feeling which induces him to accept me, and which will make him, in the end, love me? For I shall learn to make him love me, Louise.



Do you wish to know how I pass my evenings? Instead of interrogating the future I retrace my steps towards the past; I re-peruse, according to their date, your letters of the past year; and, drawing a parallel between my present position and that which I then occupied, although even it was so happy, it seems to me as if I had ascended from the fourth, up to the seventh, heaven. That was my epoch of phantoms; your father wrote to me with severity, and I trembled before this porter. Phantoms, where are you? Monsieur Champin, where is your malice? And, instead of severe admonitions, M. Reybaz allows me to spend the Christmas at the parsonage! And when I find myself at the parsonage on Christmas-day, I shall remind M. Prevere that New Year's Day is close at hand; and that, by only losing three days of dogmatics and Hebrew, I shall be able to spend by your side the little remaining portion of the old year, and enter with you on the new one which is before us. I confide these important secrets to your discretion, Louise, but without prohibiting you from committing any species of indiscretion which may be favourable to the accomplishment of the aforesaid secrets.

YOUR CHARLES.

## LXXXIV.

LOUISE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

IF you re-peruse my letters, Charles, I do the same by yours; and I see from them that this is not the first time that you have experienced disappointments in the course of your studies. I hope, therefore, that in the present instance, as in those of the past, these clouds will be merely passing, and that they will not permanently cloud the landscape any more than their predecessors. I fancy that it is inevitable you should learn many branches of

knowledge which only indirectly tend to form you for the profession of the sacred ministry; and I do not feel surprised that, after having conceived in the society of M. Prevere so lofty a conception of the goal, you should be somewhat disappointed on being constrained, in order to reach it in your turn, to retrace your steps to the starting point of those dull and arid paths which lead to it. I was under the necessity of going to all this expense of reasoning in order to tranquillise my mind; for what would become of us, if, sliding down the declivity on which you are now standing, you should grow discouraged in proportion as you approach that haven where my father awaits your coming? However, the just conclusion at which you have arrived, viz. that discouragement ought to be considered rather as an indication of want of inclination than of resources, fully reassures me.

Here is the winter threatening us, and yet what delightful weather we still have. Yesterday the country was resplendent in loveliness, and all the scene breathed that repose and peace which seems to clothe the fields after the toil of the harvest, and after they have yielded up their golden store. Not to lose any of this closing magnificence, I rambled about nearly the whole day. In the morning M. Prevere proposed to me to take a walk together. We crossed the Rhone, and pursued the course of the river along the opposite bank until we reached Cartigny. This village is as rural and peaceable as our own, and, like our own, it has also a handsome chateau. As we were passing by it, guess who we saw there? I will give you a hundred—a thousand guesses. In the midst of a large and gay party who were assembled in front of the house, was a gentleman in a riding-coat, with handsome features, and with one arm in a sling. Close beside him was a stout, a very stout gentleman, loose and flowing in his dress, flowing in his manner, with bushy eyebrows, and his hat very much on one side. I exclaimed, "There is M. Dumont, and that other gentleman must be M. Bellot!" "It is indeed themselves," replied M. Prevere. And thereupon we took the liberty of peeping at them indiscreetly for a full minute from behind the hedge. I

felt almost afraid, as you did at the dinner; but I experienced at the same time the liveliest pleasure at this unexpected meeting, which has made me familiar with the appearance of two men whom I love with all my heart, on account of the kindness which they have shown to you. We did not hear what they said, but on one occasion we heard, doubtless caused by some witty sally, that laugh of M. Dumont's of which you have told us—so good-tempered, so frank and open, that it instantaneously communicated itself to the whole party,\* and even to us behind the hedge. After a short pause we passed on without being seen, and, again crossing the Rhone, at the ferry of Peney, we arrived at the parsonage by dinner time.

In the evening, M. Prevere being busy, and my father absent, I took Dourak with me, and we started off for a ramble to the Chevron hills. Never, Charles, did the spectacle of that verdant valley, of the mountain of Saleve, of those Alps, all purple with the rays of the setting sun, appear to me so beautiful! A transparent haze was thrown like a veil over the face of the landscape, and instead of shedding a gloom over the scene, seemed rather to multiply and spread around a subtle and scintillating light, while, on every side around me, glowed the rich tints of the autumn foliage. "Lovely valley! beautiful and beloved country!" thought I, with a feeling of tender and melting gratitude. And then my gaze was riveted upon the parsonage, from which I could not again withdraw my eyes. Ah! Charles, what a world of hopes hovered over that peaceful resting-place! How much did it conjure up of the future! What lifelike visions animated and intoxicated my heart! Tears of happiness flowed from my eyes, and I blessed God who gave you to M. Prevere, that I might be given to you, that I might find my happiness in your tender affection, and in your sheltering care the support, the refuge, and the dearly-loved shelter of my life!

While I was surrendering my whole soul to these emotions, Dourak drew out from among the withered leaves that were strewn around, my little volume of Paul

and Virginia, which I had mislaid on my last visit. It was in a melancholy condition, nevertheless I welcomed it back again with the liveliest pleasure, so much attachment do I always feel toward those books in which I have for the first time read some interesting story. Are you subject to such childish fancies? With me the colour of the pages, their form, the slightest peculiarities of the leaves, the disposition of the paragraphs—all end in becoming associated with the charm of the book, so that if these things be altered, the charm is lessened, I read with different impressions, it is no longer the same scenes which delighted me so much before. And yet, shall I confess it, Charles? When I had thus recovered my lost volume, I opened it, I attempted to read—but, compared with those emotions which I had so recently experienced, these pages appeared to me cold, these pictures of happiness feeble, and the whole without power any longer to captivate me. I closed the book and took my way back with Dourak to the parsonage.

Your LOUISE.

## LXXXV.

MONSIEUR PREVERE TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

It was intended, my dear boy, that you should come and spend two or three days with us at Christmas; I am going to propose to you another arrangement, which, without interrupting your studies, will compensate to you for the pleasure you promised yourself. Your four days of vacation will commence on the twenty-ninth; we intend to pass that day and the following with you. M. Reybaz has purchases to make in the town, and in addition to



this he has promised to take Louise once to the theatre. You will accompany them there on Friday, if the play should happen to be a suitable one.

Adieu, my dear boy. We are enjoying the thought of seeing you, and in this dear expectation I embrace you tenderly.

P'REVERE.

## LXXXVI.

### THE PRECENTOR TO CHARLES.

*The Parsonage.*

LAST night by the fireside we melted the lead; there was the little one, Martha, and I. Jean Redard dropped in for a moment to see what we had got, but quite as much to make a parade of his own, where they have had a purse, which is significant, and an altar, which he thinks is a token of a wedding for one of his three daughters—each of them taking it to herself. As happened with us and several others of the hamlet, there was a sword, indicating a commotion among the powers, and the battling of armies. This would agree well with what is said about Russia, and the couriers incessantly travelling the high road of Germany.

To return to the matter in hand—it was about eight o'clock, when, taking from the box the little bits of lead which I had picked up here and there in the course of the year, and in particular a lump that came from the roof of the pigeon-house, I divided them into three parts, one for each of us, regretting not having you here to receive your share. Martha melted first, and brought out a figure that made us merry; inasmuch as, besides having nothing unlucky about it, it was covered with altars, foretelling husbands by dozens for her, and, at the corner, a ship, denoting travel

and sea-voyage. Whereupon the little one invited herself to her wedding, and I to the christening of her third, to stand godfather, with Combet for my gossip. Martha is forty-six, and has no follower whatsoever; nevertheless, the lead rarely deceives, and she would not be the first woman in the village who, though of ripe age, has found a lad to marry her, if, along with her fifty years, she brought him fifty louis of dowry. As for the ship, it is either a freak of the metal or else of our imagination; for there is no chance that poor Martha will ever ship herself for America, and drink her coffee on the spot where the plant grows.

I melted second, and poured out all at once with a single cast of the pan; not in driblets, as some do, wishing to secure more chances for themselves; without thinking that to act thus is to pretend to govern Fate, instead of it governing us. Therefore, what is the consequence? To a crooked question, Fate returns a crooked answer; and, instead of a single piece, the signs of which agree in one clear and certain prognostic, they have two or three, the signs of which oppose and contradict one another, and end in a lying prognostic. Howsoever, mine betokened no great change either for better or worse, having neither purses more ample than is requisite for daily bread, nor ashes or black patches, foreboding the grave. Only, towards the edges, there were two swords crossed—one half-broken, indicating defeat, and, not far off, ends of tongues, denoting the darts of gossip and envenomed words. But ever since the days of Cain, blood has been spilt on earth; and, ever since those of Eve, the tongue has been at work: there is therefore nothing in this that need give one more concern than usual.

The little one came next, laughing at the thing, and affecting not to believe in it, in which I did not contradict her, dreading what her lead might bring forth; for while she was pouring, I saw a cinder turning round that had settled upon it, which disheartened me greatly. When the lead was poured out, I saw the cinder fixed not far from the rim; and, putting it out of sight by stealth,

I have kept the prognostic shut up fast in my own mind, without Martha and Louise, who were all attention to the altars, the purses, and the star-shaped flowers, discovering in the lead anything but wedding, happiness, and days brightened by the favours of heaven. For my part, I was somewhat cheered by their talk, forasmuch as the cinder, if it really was there (and perhaps I rather feared that it was, than saw it), was at least without black patches, without hollows, and seeming rather a malicious sport of chance or of the air, than a sign ordained from on high. At any rate, Louise shall remain in ignorance of the matter.

M. Prevere has written to you ~~that~~<sup>that</sup> we shall go to town on Thursday for two days, as well to make purchases, as on your account, and to take Louise to the theatre, which I have promised to show her, and also myself who have never yet seen it. On the same occasion we shall visit the Museum, where those curious looking stones are, and all the wild beasts, like life; besides the church of St. Peter, where are to be seen the twelve apostles coloured, and those high columns joining to form a vault overhead—a true house of God, which I never enter without feeling as it were an impression of the tabernacle, the precincts, and the holy respect of the Lord. Not far off, I wish to show Louise that staircase in the town-hall, which you ascend by a winding pavement, for all the world like a street, to the roof of the building, and where, in ancient times, the four syndics rode up on horseback, followed by their train. After seeing these sights, or among hands, we shall look after the purchases which we have to make, and in which you will guide us, knowing the dealers if not their goods. As for M. Prevere, he will be busy in his own way, but will join us at meals and on Thursday evening, which we shall spend by the fireside. We shall lodge at Madame Chaumont's, where you will bespeak three rooms—the same, if possible, that we had two years ago.

God be praised, Louise is better than I have yet seen her. Be diligent then, Charles, in learning your profes-

sion thoroughly; and do not forget that, favoured by God, you have nothing left to do but to render yourself worthy of it. Be like those trees which we know not who has planted, but whose good mien causes them to be spared, till they are honoured for the shade they afford, and the fruit they bear.

Your affectionate

REYBAZ.

END OF VOL. I.